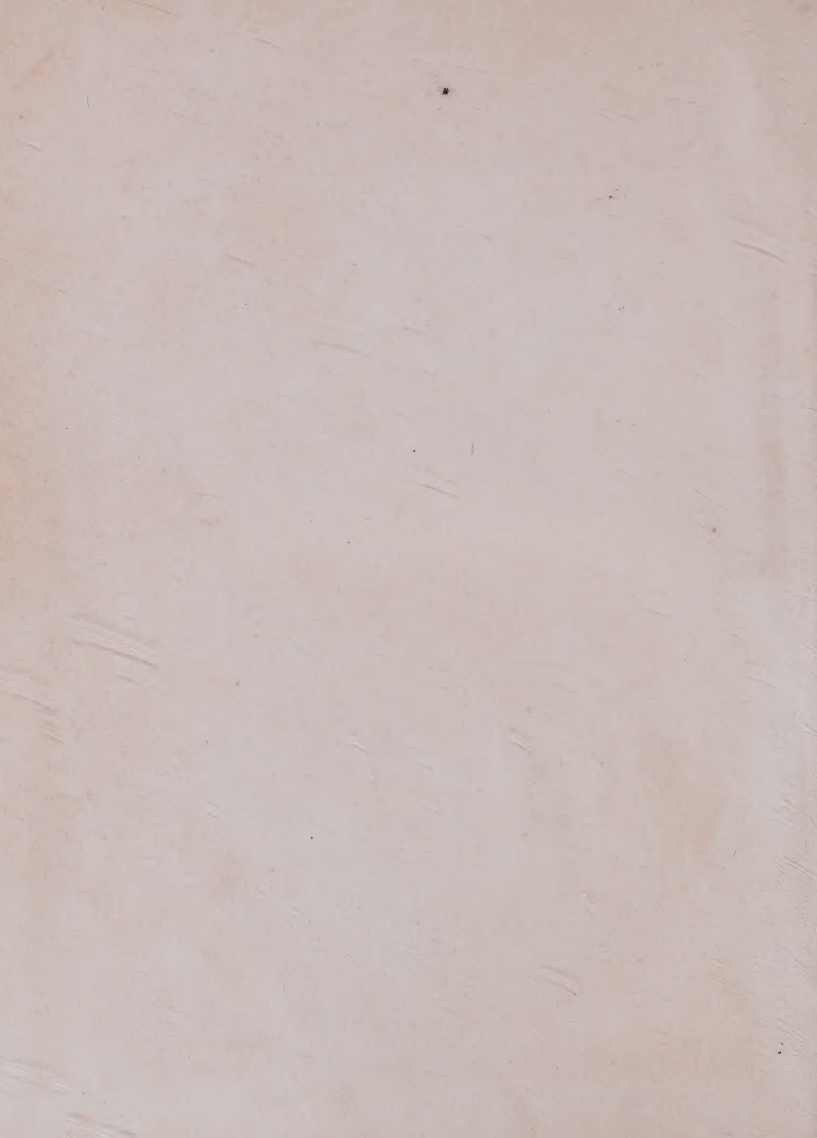


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INGLE NOOK
by
CARRIE CARLTON









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INGLENOOK.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

BY

CARRIE CARLTON.

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INGLENOOK.

CHAPTER I.

THE summer of 1850 was a long time ago, and California didn't look then as it does now; at least, so people say who were here then, and they ought to know. I couldn't begin to tell you all the changes that have taken place since then, even if you wanted to hear it, and I'm sure you don't. I'm only going to tell you of three dear little children that came here at that time, with their father, and mother, and Carlo—we mustn't forget Carlo—and how they lived, what they did, and all about it.

Well, one afternoon of a long, hot day, this family came in sight of their new home. They had come from their beautiful home, away "down East," in a crowded, uncomfortable steamer, and it was a relief to be on land once more, if the surroundings were not as pleasant as could be wished. They landed, of course, in San Francisco, but their future home was further inland, and they continued their journey without delay, leaving to some future day the exploration of that city, that, though only a dream then, was destined for so brilliant a future. A couple of strong, clumsy looking wagons were readily procured—the only thing that would hold together over those rough mountain roads—and for seven days our travelers had been going "homeward," over hills and through valleys, through clouds of dust and glaring sunshine, and

now while they are ascending the last hill, at the foot of which, on the other side, lies their home, I'll tell you who they are.

First, there's *Mr. Blythe*, the father; a fine looking man, that no one would object to calling "Papa"—if they happened to need one. At home, where they had lived in a nice big house, with beautiful furniture in the rooms, and pictures on the walls—and when he used to have four kisses in the morning before he went down town—this papa was rather a dainty *Mr. Blythe*, who wore nice broadcloth clothes and kid gloves. His hat was always shiny, and his gold-headed cane was the nicest kind of a horse for Master Johnnie. But now he had come to California he thought he must be rough; and the voyage had helped him some, for if any thing will take the polish off a person, it is a sea voyage to California. So if he

fancied he was rough in his great broad Panama hat and red flannel shirt, with his brown beard almost all over his face, we could have told him he was very handsome.

Then there was *Mrs. Blythe*, the mother; and if you should see her, you would think she had a right to her name—you know “blythe” is a Scotch word, and means “sunny,” “happy.” She had beautiful hair, that some people might call *red*—if they were vexed with her—but you ought to see how it rippled and waved all over her head, and took the biggest kind of hair-pins to make it stay anywhere; and her skin was so white. And then her eyes—I wish you could have seen her eyes—it seemed as though all the sunshine in the skies, and all the love and charity out of heaven were mingled together and shone from them.

No wonder the children were so good and loving to each other; I doubt if there ever was a better mother—except yours. Their pet name for her was “sweet little mother.” And now I must hurry and tell about the children, for that heavy old wagon is creeping along.

In front, with the driver, is Master Johnnie ten years old, and as pretty a specimen of Young America as one would wish to see. I don't use the term “Young America,” as it is sometimes used, to describe a boy aping the vices of a man, for such boys are not the ones to represent our country. I mean the boy that is what a boy should be, at his age; he might sit for the picture of “Young America,” and Columbia herself would be proud of him. His forehead was broad and high, and his dark hair clustered above it in those wavy locks that mothers love so much to handle; his

eye was clear, bright and *honest*, and his head was poised on his slender white neck with the grace of Ariel, and the dignity of a young king. Do you think that is too much to say of a boy? Not a bit of it. There is scarcely a play-ground in the country from which we could not select a model for any race of kings, and are they not our princes? But Johnnie was a boy yet, on this hot, dusty day, and did not dream how handsome he was, nor yet that he was noble, brave, and true. Other people knew it, and that was better yet.

In the back part of the wagon—down on the straw beside her mother, for “prairie schooners” are not built for passengers—was little Alice. She was six years old, and a “darling little daughter,” so her mother told her forty times a day. She was childish enough, and enjoyed games and toys like other children, but the quiet

grace of her manner, and the loveliness of her disposition, were remarkable. The dear old Scotch nurse that they had left behind, used to shake her head and say, "the bonnie chiel was unco canny," she'd be "e'er whiles flitting." But as yet the tenderest love saw nothing to alarm it, only the little spirit did sometimes seem too pure for earth.

But what is this nestled down in the center of the group, on a pallet of coats and shawls, and shaded by a great umbrella? What should it be, but the baby?

"A little rosy dimpled thing,
A bud of loveliness and spring,
A fairy two feet high.
Oh, who could pass without a kiss,
That cherry mouth of smiling bliss,
And merry sparkling eye."

But the bright eyes were shut now, and Baby was asleep. If I had time, I'd like

to tell you how very sweet she looked, lying there, but the wagon has almost reached their home, and she will soon be up and at her pranks, for Baby is two years and a half old, and as full of life and—mischief, as a robin is of music.

No name was considered quite sweet enough for this pet of all pets, and so she had a new one every hour. Every one called her the first thing they thought of, and we, dear reader, will do the same.

One of her little fat arms is thrown over the neck of a great Newfoundland dog—Carlo—who has shared her cradle, her bread and milk, her sea voyage, and now her dream, probably.

Are you tired of this long introduction? I'm sorry if you are, but I think it would be well if we could oftener know something more of a person than the name, when we are introduced. You see we are

already so well acquainted with the Blythes, that we know we can go right in and live happily with them, even in this funny little cabin before which they have stopped.

It did look funny enough to the newcomers, this cabin, though it was really quite stylish for the times and the place. Oh! you want to know where it was, do you? Well, now, I don't like to tell that, for *Mr.* Johnnie might not like it—he is a grown-up gentleman now. I meet him sometimes on Montgomery Street—but if you can find him out and ask him, I guess he will tell you. I can only say it took them a whole week to go from San Francisco to their home, but then the roads were dreadfully rough, something like the “goose's” journey “up stairs, and down stairs, and in the lady's chamber.”

The house was built of rough boards

that looked quite new, had a door and one window it. Johnnie declared it was just about as big as their chicken house at home, and then all the children had a great laugh, and played they were chickens hunting a place to roost. For you must know they all climbed out of the wagon, and, as nobody came to receive them, Johnnie ran and opened the door and went in—just as Rosebud did into the house of the seven little dwarfs. Did you ever hear that story? And while Mr. Blythe was helping the teamsters to unload the wagons, for there was another one behind with their baggage and boxes, mamma and the children went through the house and around the house hunting for—who do you suppose? If you could have heard them calling on every side, “Joseph!” “Uncle Joe!” “Uncle *Do!*” you would have soon found out. But no uncle Joe

came yet. So the wagons were unloaded, the baggage piled up beside the cabin, to be arranged at their leisure, the teamsters drove away, and our friends got into the shade to rest and look about them a little.

There was not a living thing in sight, nor any sign of human habitation. There was a little mining camp about half a mile away, but the hills rose on every side like an eternal barrier of silence, and no sight or sound broke on the magical stillness of that fading day, when earth seemed wrapped in a golden haze, and floating, as it were, in a sea of amber sunshine. Oh! the hills of California! I wish I dared attempt to tell how beautiful they are. But words can not express it. You must see them, as I do, and then you will *feel* it.

The grass was all parched and withered, of course, by this time, much to the disappointment of the children, who thought it

would be green all the year round. But one immense tree beside the cabin—for which they thanked Uncle Joe—a dozen or so on the hill-sides around, and a tangle of chaparral and manzanita here and there, furnished verdure and shadow enough to add one more beauty to the picture of our friends' new home. They had rested somewhat, and were thinking about looking for some supper, when a shout from without drew them all to the doorway again, and a man came out of the chaparral and approached the house. Such a looking man! Johnnie looked at him suspiciously. Alice wrapped herself in her mother's dress, so that only her little head could be seen, and little Dell cried out:—

“Oh, papa! Tooso's coming! Tooso's coming!” Being familiar with Johnnie's version of Crusoe, she probably meant

him. The stranger was a rough-looking fellow, and no mistake. A great, slouchy Spanish hat covered his head, and all of his face that was not already covered by a rough, tangled beard; but there must have been a face somewhere under it, for the shout evidently came from him. He wore great mining boots that came nearly to his hips, and pants of leather, that had seen better days. A long flannel shirt, that had once been gray, but wasn't any particular color then, a leather belt holding a revolver and two or three knives, a game bag at his side, a gun in his hand, and pockets all over him, completed his costume. As I said before, the children were startled, the parents looked inquiringly, but Carlo no sooner heard the voice than he gave a quick, sharp bark, that was almost a cry, and bounding toward the stranger, seemed ready to tear him in

pieces. The instinct of the brute, quickened by his undying love, had told him who the stranger was, and as Carlo was a prominent member of the Blythe family, his certificate was sufficient, and Uncle Joe soon found himself where he hadn't been for five long years, in the clasp of loving arms. I won't undertake to tell how much hugging he went through, and kissing too, after they had pulled off his hat and found a place to kiss, for all loved him dearly, even Dell, who never saw him, and Alice, who couldn't possibly remember him, though Dell afterward said, speaking of his first appearance:—

“He was a defful sight; it was sockin' to natur.”

Then Uncle Joe *would* make them all sit down, and talk to him while he prepared supper. And what do you think was the first thing he did toward getting it?

Why, he lit his pipe—that's the way men do housework in California—he went to smoking his pipe, and, much to the surprise of his sister Bessie—the mother, you know—who laughed at, and couldn't help watching him, he prepared a nice supper without seasoning it with one grain of tobacco, and then they all sat down to the table, and how they *did* eat, and how they *did* talk, and were as "happy as clams in high water," if you know how happy that is.

After supper there was a good deal of contriving where they were to sleep, for there was but one bed in the house. It was finally decided that father, mother, and baby Dell should have that. A cunning little bed was made for Alice with some blankets on a bench. Uncle Joe declared his intention of camping out under the big tree with his blankets, and, after much

persuasion of the reluctant mamma, Johnnie was told he might camp with him. Great was the pride of our little hero. He loved adventure of any kind, and camping out was only the beginning of the splendid times he meant to have "roughing it" in California. Very brave felt Master Johnnie, secretly, wishing it was bedtime, arguing away mother's fears of a cold, quieting Alie's apprehensions of a snake, and laughing with good-natured superiority at Dell's wild legends of a "yat," the most terrible thing she ever saw. Wait till morning, Johnnie, and you may hold your head higher yet.

In the mean time every thing had been made ready for the night; the little girls had had their bath, and looked like two sweet cherubs, in their long white night-gowns, and soon they were ready for their "sociable," for it was the custom of these

kind, loving parents to devote at least half an hour every evening to the children at their bedtime, in order to send them to their sleep as happy as possible. Johnnie found a box and sat down by his mother's side, holding one of her hands in his, leaning his head against her, while her other hand wandered through his dark, curling hair. It was a favorite attitude with them, and to this day, and till the end of life, will Johnnie remember the touch of that gentle hand; and not *he* alone. I have seen men, rough, and seemingly coarse, from their hard contact with the world, men wrinkled and gray with age, speak with a wistful tenderness of the gentle touch of their mothers' hand upon their hair in boyhood. Other hands may have soothed them since, whiter, perhaps, and softer to the touch, but 'twas not the same. Think of it, boys; cherish her

while you may; a man can have but one mother.

Allie nestled in her father's arms, one little white hand softly patting his cheek or stroking his whiskers, and her loving eyes watching the frolic of Miss Dell Dimple, who had taken possession of Uncle Joe, and was having a great romp. He would poke his fingers in her side, and then she would throw her head back and laugh—how she *would* laugh—showing all her little white teeth, and bringing out, or rather in, all the pretty dimples which gave her one pet name. Then Allie, who was proud of Dell's accomplishments, told her to say the good-night verses that nurse Margaret taught her. So she repeated them with a sweet lisp, that my old steel-pen can't do justice to. Here are the verses, though, for the "little ones:"—

“ Little gold bird with the crimson wing,
Come from your nest in the greenwood tree;
Sit on my pillow and sweetly sing—
Sing your prettiest song to me.

“ Little blue bird with the silver wing,
Fan me to sleep this summer night,
Mamma will kiss me—little bird, sing—
Shut baby's eyes, they're all too bright.

“ Little white bird with the snowy wing,
Come from your nest in the blue, blue sky,
Bring baby dreams, and mamma will sing
To her little bird with the blue, blue eye.”

It sounded very sweet, I assure you, the way Dell said it; and after they had all kissed her, bedtime was declared.

Johnnie was now full of business. He spread the blankets on the ground, with the head toward the big tree, helped Uncle Joe to arrange the pillows, and wanted one of the pistols to put under his. This occasioned some consultation, but Mr. Blythe said he could trust Johnnie with

one, for he had often practiced with a pistol at home. So, with the weapon under his head, and courage in his heart, Johnnie laid down to sleep, for the first time in his life, in the open air.

He soon fell into the deep, undreaming sleep of tired boyhood. All at once he was awakened—not gradually, but in an instant, as though from some great shock, and a consciousness of danger strained every nerve to its utmost tension. The darkness was impenetrable, but raising his head to listen, he saw the gleam of two bright eyes, like balls of fire, not six feet from him.

For an instant, Johnnie sat almost petrified with fear, gazing into the fiery eyes of his mysterious foe, and then becoming more accustomed to the darkness, he discerned the outline of a large gray form, and knew it was a bear. Johnnie had

read many a story of travelers and hunters encountering bears, had wondered and gloried in their courage and presence of mind, but never dreamed of an opportunity like this to emulate them.

Uncle Joe was sleeping soundly by his side, and he had not time to waken him, even if he wanted to, which he did not, for as his courage rose above his fear, a little pride rose with it, that he was to meet this danger alone.

All this, and a great deal else, ran through his mind in that instant—for people are apt to think pretty fast when a grizzly is looking them in the face—and, happily ignorant of the worst of his danger, he slipped his hand under his pillow, seized the revolver, aimed as near as possible between the glaring eyes, and *fired*.

A terrible howl followed the report, and Uncle Joe sprang to his feet just in time

to meet the frantic beast, who, rushing on the prostrate boy, would have torn him limb from limb in another moment. The bullet had entered his neck, wounding him, but not dangerously, and his rage was ungovernable.

Uncle Joe had saved Johnnie, but he was now in great danger himself. The bear had come upon him with such force as to throw him upon his knees, and having no weapon in his hand, all he could do was to seize the monster by the throat and endeavor to keep the mouth, with its horrid fangs, turned from himself. One paw, however, was tearing his arm and shoulder in a dreadful manner. Poor Johnnie grasped the revolver tightly in his hand, and his heart swelled till it seemed ready to burst. He must fire on the bear, but there was a risk of hitting his uncle.

“Oh, Uncle Joe, shall I fire? I’m afraid I shall hit you.”

“Fire, Johnny,” said his uncle, hoarsely, “and, God help us.”

Once more the trusty little hand pulled the trigger, and then—it was no shame to my hero—Johnnie fainted. His father and mother had rushed out at the alarm, and it was upon her bosom the brave boy fell. Surely some good spirit guided the bullet that time, for it went straight to the heart of the grizzly monster, and he fell lifeless to the ground.

The excited party now retreated to the house, where Uncle Joe’s wounds were dressed, and Johnnie was “brought to,” hugged, kissed, and praised at the greatest rate you ever *saw*. But the dear boy felt no pride now. He would look up in his mother’s face, with a solemn expression in his dark eyes, and say :—

"Oh, mother, I was *so* afraid I should shoot Uncle Joe."

There was no more sleeping done that night, and when the little sisters waked in the morning, just think what a wonderful story they heard. It seemed to fall to Uncle Joe's lot to tell it, and he would no sooner get through, than he would be invited to tell it right over again. Allie divided her wonder and kisses between the two heroes, flavoring Uncle Joe's share with pity for his wounds, but showing so much loving pride in Johnnie, that you could easily tell where *she* thought the honor belonged. "Puss-in-boots," as she was called this morning, cared nothing for the details, but walked softly round and round the huge carcass as it lay in the shade of the big tree, her eyes opened as wide as possible, and saying, once in a while to herself, "Donnie sooted it." It was a great event to her, at

any rate, and it was remarked that she expressed a great contempt for "yats," ever after.

After breakfast, while the mother was busy in the house, the rest of the family went out to the big tree, and Mr. Blythe, under the direction of Uncle Joe, whose wounded right arm prevented him from assisting, proceeded to take the skin off of Mr. Bear that he might be more useful after death than he ever was in his life. He was an immense fellow, and his skin made quite a carpet when it was spread down.

"May I have the skin, father?" asked Johnnie, who had sat silent and thoughtful throughout the operation.

"To be sure you may, Johnnie, if you want it. No one can deny the spoils to the victor."

"What will you do with it?" asked

Uncle Joe. "Have a coat made, and go over the mountains with me?"

"No, something better than that," answered Johnnie, but he spoke a little shyly, and a bright color stole into his face. Then overcoming his momentary embarrassment, he went on:—

"I have read of the Indian braves who bring home their furs and skins from the chase, and lay them at the feet of those they love best. I am not a brave, you know," he said laughing, "but this is the first thing I ever shot, and I would like to make a present of the skin to somebody."

"That's a good idea, Johnnie," said Uncle Joe, "and as your acquaintance is not very extensive about here, we may venture a guess who will get it. Come on, we'll help you. You shall be the victorious brave and march ahead bearing the trophies, while we, your warriors, follow with the

captives," and seizing "Puss" with his left arm he mounted her on his shoulder, very much to her delight. Mr. Blythe joining in the fun, took Allie in his arms, and so they marched into the house; Johnnie carrying the skin on his shoulder, and trailing it behind him like a king's ermine.

Mrs. Blythe looked up in laughing surprise as they entered, and Johnnie, counting on his loving and uncritical audience, ventured on a speech. Lifting his hat from his curly head, he bowed low and said:—

"Young Fire-Away is a great brave. He has been to the chase, and comes to the wigwam of Sunny-Eye before he lifts the door of his own lodge. Blythe-Heart is his father, and Smoke-Pipe is his Uncle. White-Lilly and Bo-Peep are his sisters, and Fire-Away is—*some*. (Irreverent laughter among the audience). A young brave always gives the best fur to the

maiden he loves. Fire-Away brings his to lay at the feet of her he loves best on earth—his mother.”

Now that wasn't a very bad speech for Johnnie, was it? It was received with great applause, but the mother had no speech to make in reply. She stood on the soft fur carpet with her arms around Johnnie, and kissed him again and again. But the tears were in her eyes all the time, for she was very happy, and women have a trick of crying when they are happy.

I will say here, that, ever after, the most sacred memories and tender associations clustered around that rug. It always occupied one place in the room, and just in front of “mother's chair.” There Johnnie sat while his mother's hand lingered on his head like a blessing. There Allie knelt to say her evening prayer. There Della

and Carlo had their frolics for many a year, and around it would gather the whole family circle, to enjoy the half hour "sociable" that helped to make a home—a charming home—even in this board shanty.

CHAPTER II.

“MOTHER, what shall we call our new home?” asked Johnnie, a few days after their arrival, as he sat in the doorway enjoying the morning air. The father and Uncle Joe had gone over the hills to the “claim,” to see if there was any prospect of water so they could go to work, and the mother was busy unpacking a large box, and selecting such things as would be useful in this strange, new life she had found in California. Allie and Dell were looking on with interest and chattering like magpies as each well remembered article came to light, reminding them of the home they had left, their little friends and playmates, and oftener yet of dear old nurse Margaret.

“Well, I don’t know, my dear,” answered his mother, after a few minutes, “we ought to have Margaret here, she has so many pretty, quaint words at her command that I’m sure she would find something that would just suit.”

“Oh, I wish she had come,” cried Allie, “it don’t hardly seem like home without nurse Margaret.”

At this moment they were startled by a loud scream from Dell, whether of pain or delight it was hard to tell, as only the young lady’s heels were visible above the top of the box. She was speedily dragged out, and with her came, hugged tight in her arms, the cause of this mishap, no less a personage than “Miss Betsy Blowsy Blythe.” The father had given her this name long ago, at home, in token of the general wildness of her appearance. But no words could do justice to her now.

What was wildness before was downright insanity now; but what well brought-up young lady wouldn't go insane, to take a long sea voyage with her wardrobe in such a state, to say nothing of being packed in a box all the way. Her hair—which being “truly” hair, was a source of great pride to Dell—was standing at least twenty-four different ways. One of her eyes was punched out, or rather in, and rattled in her head showing that she had caught a dreadful cold some way. The other looked imploringly toward the ceiling, and never could be induced to look any other way. Her mouth had been enlarged on one occasion when she was sick and Dell was giving her a dose of “palagolic.” The spoon wouldn't go in her mouth, so Dell took the scissors and improved upon it by making it reach clear across one cheek. Altogether her countenance was

remarkably prepossessing. Don't you think so? "Dell Dimple" almost went wild with delight at the sight of her favorite, and Carlo, recognizing his old rival, seized Miss Betsy in his mouth and ran out doors, followed by Dell, and pretty sure of a good romp.

"Here is our box of seeds, Johnnie, that Margaret gathered for us" said the mother, bringing it to light, as she spoke. "I remember she said to me—'Here's some of the honeysuckle I planted the day Johnnie was born; plant it about the door of your new home, and when the dear children smell the breath of its flowers in the morning let them think of old Margaret. And here's the climbing rose that is Allie's flower—for hush, child, I'll not tell you why. And here's a dozen pretty flowers you must plant for my baby to pick them just when she likes. Ah! the new home

is not the old, but if you can not make it as bonnie as the old, you can e'en keep the inglenook cheerie."

"Dear old Margaret, how she loved us." said Johnnie.

"Oh, mother," Alice cried, "Johnnie wants a name for our home, let's call it 'Inglenook.' That means 'fireside' you know, and we'll write a letter to nurse Margaret, and oh, she'll be *so* pleased. Won't we, mother, please do?"

"And we'll plant all these seeds, and in a little while—things grow so fast in California—it will be so beautiful here that father will think his 'Inglenook' the dearest place on earth," echoed Johnnie eagerly, as the loving thought filled his heart.

"My darling children," answered the happy mother, embracing them, "such loving hearts would make an 'Inglenook' of a desert. I will gladly join you in any

effort to soften the roughness of this new life, and this makes it easy to teach you one lesson I had intended. Listen to me now, and I will make it as plain as I can.

“This country we have come to, is new and unsettled yet, and every one expects to have every thing rough about their homes. As a general thing, people that come here, if they bring any of their conveniences or refinements with them, see how things are, and say, ‘Every thing is rough here, so we’ll be rough too,’ and after a time they pride themselves on their want of refinement. They let a wild country educate them, whereas they should educate the country. Do you understand me, Johnnie?”

“Go on, mother dear, I’m thinking.”

“To show you what I mean; you remember the women we saw where we stopped on our way from San Francisco; I

have no doubt at home they were tidy, genteel women, and are surely kind-hearted yet, but would you like to see your mother or sisters appear as they did?"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Johnnie.

"Do you think papa would like to come home and see me looking so?" asked the mother, smiling.

"Why, mother, he'd think you was crazy. Their hair wasn't combed, they had no stockings on, and their dresses were torn and dirty."

"Well, dear, now you can see the drift of my idea. If we grow careless in little things, we will be very apt to grow careless in big ones. It was the *little* foxes, you know, that spoiled the vines. If I begin to set the table without any tablecloth, it won't be long before I shall be letting my children go dirty, and may be,

ragged; and no woman that does that, is very apt to keep herself nice. If we neglect any of the small courtesies to which we have been accustomed, we shall soon neglect the greater ones, and so we shall grow as careless and uncouth as those people whom we saw on our journey. Of course, we can't convert the country, but we can influence *ourselves*, and that will be something gained. And Oh, Johnnie, the greatest inducement of all," and the mother's voice grew deep and earnest, "is to make home such a 'cheerie' spot that father—he will have the most temptation, you know—will never, *never* seek enjoyment elsewhere. Do you understand your lesson, my boy!"

"Yes, mother dear, I think I do; and what a beautiful lesson. I shall never forget it."

"I think I understand it too, mother,"

said dear little Alice, softly. "I will help, too, you shall see."

So the loving league was formed, and they went to work immediately and heartily. The honeysuckle was planted by the door, the climbing roses by the southern wall, the other flowers here and there, wherever they happened to fancy; the house was adorned with as many things from home as possible, and when the father and Uncle Joe returned, little "Magpie" met them way up the road, Carlo and "Betsy" following, with a wonderful story, of which they could distinguish nothing but "*Ningynook*." Of course that was all Greek to them till they reached home and heard it told in English. The father was pleased, and talked in a joking way about its being their castle, to descend always to the eldest son, and how, in time, the family would be called the "Blythes of Ingle-

nook." Uncle Joe was unusually silent, and appeared to have something in his throat that troubled him. Probaby it was the warm biscuit and tea he was devouring—for he hadn't had a *woman's* biscuit and tea for a long time—and between you and me, I *do* think they are a little better than the miners make.

After supper, he lit his great big pipe, and then called out—"Who wants to hear a story, now?" Such a rush as there was then; for the children must all kiss "dear old Uncle Joe," almost demolishing his wounded arm in the operation, and then settled themselves to hear the story. 'Bob-o'-link" perched, as usual, in Uncle Joe's lap, with "Betsy Blowsy" hugged tight in her arms.

"Once upon a time"—began Uncle Joe, and blew a great cloud of smoke right in "Betsy's" face.

"Oh, you ugly old pipe," cried Della, resenting the insult offered her favorite.

"If you knew what a wonderful pipe it is, you wouldn't turn up your little nose in that way."

"Oh, tell us about it, Uncle Joe," chimed in Allie, eagerly, "I *do* love a 'truly' story, and about that ugly old man on your pipe. Oh, ain't it funny?"

"Well, this pipe I brought from Germany," said Uncle Joe, contemplating, with some pride, its long, shining stem, and capacious bowl, of dark mahogany color, on the front of which was the oddest figure of a face you ever saw. "I brought this from Germany, and there is no end to the wonderful things I saw and heard while I was there, which I will tell you about some time, but this wonderful pipe was all I brought away. Perhaps you

wouldn't believe, now, that this pipe is enchanted?"

"*Enchanted!*" cried all the children, with their eyes wide open in astonishment. Even father and mother looked interested.

"Yes, all you have to do is to fill it with tobacco, and smoke it slow, this way, and keep looking right into the smoke, and you'll see such wonderful things—why, it's just like a story, and you seem to know all about it without being told; and the strangest part of it is, that the sight or story the smoker sees, is for the one that puts in the tobacco."

"Oh, ain't that funny?" cried the children. They had hardly winked once while he was talking.

"You see, ever since I have had it I have been roving around by myself, and of course I always filled my pipe, so all the stories have been for me—and pretty good

company they have been, too, I can tell you. Now if one of you should fill it, the story I should see in the smoke would be for you."

"Oh, let us try it, Uncle Joe," rang out three voices at once. And then commenced a loving dispute between Johnnie and Allie; he arguing that his sisters should have the first trial, and Allie the first of all, being the eldest; and she insisting that he ought to be first, because he was—*Johnnie*.

Uncle Joe looked at them as if he would like to hug them both up tight in his arms, but he was not naturally demonstrative and he let his eyes speak what was in his heart.

"I'll tell you how we'll fix it," said he; "you shall all have a chance, but we'll begin with 'Periwinkle' here, for if she don't

have her story first, I'm afraid she'll not keep awake to hear it."

So the pipe was emptied, though not half smoked out, and "Periwinkle"—she never had the same name an hour at a time—crushed the fragrant leaves in with her little rosy hand, then, with an air of conscious importance, lit a match for the first time in her life, and applied it to the top of the goblin's head. Poor "Betsey" had long ago fallen down unnoticed, and now lay half buried in the fur carpet—a striking satire on the durability of earthly friendship—and shedding such tears as only a broken-hearted doll could shed.

The pipe was lit; "Periwinkle" cuddled in her nest; Uncle Joe gazed dreamily at the wreaths of white smoke that went curling round and round, and began the story.

"Once upon a time, a little girl lived in

a little hut by the sea-shore. Her name was Mousie; that was a funny name, wasn't it? But she was called so because she was a wee little thing, and her mother and all the neighbors, especially the fisherman's wife, thought she never would be good for any thing. Her mother was the funniest-looking old woman you ever saw. Her face was brown, and all puckered up in little wrinkles; her nose was long and sharp, and reached almost down to her chin; her chin was long and sharp, and reached almost up to her nose; and she bent way over when she walked, and leaned on a cane. When she went to town to sell her eggs, she used to wear a great wide brimmed hat, with a black handkerchief passed over the crown, and tied under the chin; a short red cloak over her shoulders, and a green petticoat.

“I wouldn't say any thing about the old

woman being so ugly—for we can't always help the way our faces look—if she hadn't been so *cross*. Oh, she was the crossdest woman you *ever* heard of. Everybody was afraid of her tongue; and the fisherman's wife, and the shoemaker's wife—in order to keep good friends with her—would run out of their houses with their cap-strings flying, and saying, 'I think so too.'

"But no amount of scolding could kill little Mousie, though it did almost break her heart sometimes, and, to escape the clattering of tongues, she used to spend whole days on the beach. She was happy there. There were rocks she could climb over, and beautiful little grottoes, where, when the tide was down, she would store all the pretty shells she had picked up, for she dared not carry them home. Then there was sea-weed and sea-mosses that she used to gather to carpet her grottoes,

more beautiful than the richest velvet, and more useful too, for if the tide came in and wet it, it was fresher and greener than ever. And above all, there was the smooth, hard beach, with sand as yellow as gold, over which her little bare feet would skim almost as lightly as a bird; the pretty white-topped waves that were always ready for a frolic with her, and seemed to join her laughter as they covered her with glittering spray, and the free, wild wind that seemed to bear her in its arms, and wrestled with her for possession of her long bright hair.

“One day she was sitting in her grotto, looking out on the sea, and wishing she could sail away in a pearl-lined conch-shell, over its blue surface, and live in that cloud of crimson and gold that was floating along, when she heard a voice like the

faintest, sweetest note of music, calling
‘Mousie, Mousie.’

“Mousie ran out and looked all around, but nobody was in sight; and who, about there, would speak like that any way? But the voice kept calling ‘Mousie, Mousie,’ though it seemed to grow fainter every time, and, strange enough, sounded close beside her. She looked down, and there, on the sand, lay a poor little fish that had been left by the tide.

“Mousie picked the little thing up tenderly in her hand, for her heart was pitiful, and she saw it was dying for water. Its silvery scales were growing dull, its crimson-fringed gills were panting for breath and its eyes were growing glassy.

“‘Poor little fish! do you want to go home?’ said the little girl.

“‘Home!’ echoed the musical voice, like the faintest strings of a harp.

“ ‘Well, good-bye, then,’ and running down to the very edge of the waves, Mousie tossed the little fish far away, out of sight among the white-capped billows. No sooner had she done so, than the water grew still, and lay as clear and blue as the sky above it, and down through its crystal depths, Mousie saw a perfect shoal of beautiful silver fish, all coming toward where she stood, and heard the most delicious music—Oh, *such* sweet music—like that she had heard before, only stronger, for there were more voices, and the sound was mellowed into wonderful sweetness, as the notes of a bugle are when heard across the water.

“This was the song the little silver fishes sang to Mousie :—

‘Little earth maiden with long bright hair,
For the kind deed you have done this day,
What you most wish for, haste to declare,
Our gracious queen can not say thee nay.

Queen "Gem of the Spray," the Sea-King's bride,
Wept in her chamber of coral and pearl—
Wept sadly and long, for the treacherous tide,
Had carried her daughter, her one little girl,
The beautiful Princess Emeraldine,
The fairest water-sprite ever was seen,
Far up on the shore, and had left her to die
Of the dust of the earth and the beam of the sky,
But dear little Mousie saved Emeraldine,—
Now ask what you will of the Peri Queen.'

"Mousie was so bewildered, she didn't know what to do or say. She had no idea what to wish for, and so she didn't wish for any thing. The little fish she had saved—who wasn't a 'truly' fish, you know, but the Peri Princess, Emeraldine,—floated toward her and said:—

"'Dear little Mousie, I must give you something in return for my life, and as you are a little child, and don't know what to ask for, I will give you what will do you the most good. Here is a little pebble-

stone, white and clear as glass. When any one speaks cross or unkindly to you, put that in your mouth. Here is a beautiful pair of gloves, they are softer than silk, and are the color of the pink lining of the sea-shells. Wear them always, they will never wear out, and they will bring you something better than riches. And here is a scarf, white as the driven snow, and sheer as a moonbeam, or a vapor-cloud. Wear this always about your head, and everybody will admire and love you wherever you go. And, little Mousie, if you are ever in trouble of any kind, sit down in your little moss-covered grotto, and call 'Emeraldine' three times, and I will come, to you. Good-bye.

"The music was gone, the fish were gone, and Mousie would have thought she had been dreaming, only that there in her hand was the pebble, the gloves, and the scarf,

that the fish had given her. She ran home as fast as she could, and her mother beat her for being gone, and said she deserved more. The fisherman's and shoemaker's wives ran out and said, 'I think so too.' Then Mousie told her wonderful story, and her mother beat her again, and said she had told a lie. And the fisherman's and shoemaker's wives said, 'I think so too.' Then she showed what the fish had given her, and her mother beat her again, and said she should have asked for a great deal of money. And the fisherman's and shoemaker's wives said, 'I think so too.' So poor little Mousie crawled off to bed and cried herself to sleep.

"The next morning she got up and put the pebble stone in her mouth, and the gloves and scarf on, as the fish had told her. But some way she didn't feel like going to the beach to play just then, so

she ran into the kitchen where her funny old mother was black in the face, trying to blow the fire. Before she could catch her breath to begin scolding, Mousie ran out, filled her apron with chips, threw them on the fire, and soon had a fine blaze. Before she could find her voice, for very astonishment, Mousie put her snuff-box in her hand, and began to set the table. You would have laughed if you had seen that old woman that day. She had never seen Mousie do any thing before, and now she was so busy that the mother could do nothing but sit and take snuff. I dare not tell you how much she took that day. Besides, every time she tried to scold Mousie, from force of habit you know, something seemed to hinder her. She didn't know what to make of it, so she called her neighbors in, and told them all about it, and said she believed Mousie was bewitched. And the

fisherman's and shoemaker's wives said, 'I think so too.'

"But Mousie was not bewitched at all. It was owing to the magic gifts of the Peri that she grew more gentle, more kind, more beautiful, every day, and after a time, the old mother forgot how to scold, and Mousie did all the work and took care of her, and she would sit outside the door in the sun, and take snuff, and tell all the neighbors that Mousie was an angel; and the fisherman's and shoemaker's wives would say, 'I think so too.'

"After awhile, the old mother died, and left Mousie a whole chest full of gold that she had saved from selling eggs. So Mousie was very rich indeed, but everybody loved her so well before, that they couldn't love her any better now."

"Now I wonder who can tell what the three gifts were," said Uncle Joe, as he

wound up his story. The children guessed a great many things, but none of them were right. "I would like to put the question to the readers of Inglenook, but I'm afraid I should get no answers, so I'll do as he did, and tell.

"The pebble-stone was *kind words*, the gloves were *industry*, and the scarf was *modesty*."

"But that ain't all the story," cried Johnnie. "You havn't said any thing about your pipe."

"No," answered Uncle Joe, "we'll have that to-morrow night, when Allie fills the pipe, for mine is a fashionable story, and is 'to be continued.'"

CHAPTER III.

THE children needed no reminder the next night, you may be sure ; and even the father and mother were on hand to hear the second story. There was little or no question who should be first to-night, for though Allie did look lovingly toward her brother ; chivalrous little Johnnie would never take precedence of a lady, especially “my sister.” So Allie’s little white fingers crushed the fragrant leaves to-night ; applied the match to the top of the goblin’s head, and as the smoke wreaths began to curl upward, Uncle Joe began his story :—

“Mousie lived on in the little hut after her mother died, for though she had a whole chest full of gold and could have bought her-

self a palace, and worn velvet dresses every day if she liked, yet she knew nothing of the great world, but thought the little rocky cove where she had always lived, the only place on earth. She did not know of the beautiful cities far away, with their fine houses and gay stores, and of the people that dressed so splendidly, and the music and dancing. And another thing she did not know; that her eyes were bluer than the summer sky, and her long hair finer than spun gold; that her skin was as white as the sea-foam, and her cheeks and lips like the heart of a blush-rose. Following, unconsciously, a divine instinct for the beautiful, Mousie always clothed herself in white, with a string of tinted sea-shells wound about her waist.

“One day Mousie was in her grotto, lying on a couch of fresh moss, and lazily watching the clouds drift by, and the breath of

the sea as it tossed her long bright hair, when suddenly she started to her feet in the most bewildered astonishment. In the whole realm of fairy enchantment, she had seen nothing to compare with the beautiful being who knelt on the golden sand before her. Remember, Mousie had lived all her life in this poor little hamlet, where there were some half a dozen old fishermen ; but never in her life had she seen a *young man*. But had she been ever so wise, she would have been pardoned for being fascinated with the one at her feet.

“ His face was fair as a Calla blossom, and his silky beard lay on a cheek as dainty as Mousie’s own. His dark hair rippled over his head in shining waves, and lay around his broad white forehead in tiny rings. A cloak of dark velvet hung over his shoulders, confined by a golden cord, and partly concealing a coat of crimson, embroidered

with gold and fine pearls. His vest and trousers were of white satin, gleaming with embroidery, and the long white plume of his jeweled hat swept the sand as he did homage to the beautiful apparition; for, of course, he was as much surprised as Mousie.

“ ‘Speak to me, beautiful spirit,’ said the prince softly, as though he feared she would vanish. ‘Tell me, bright one, are you queen of the sea, a nymph of the fountains, or the guardian spirit of this rocky dell?’

“ ‘I am only little Mousie,’ said she, and the dark-eyed prince heard music for the first time in his life. ‘But who are you? Do you live in the rosy cloud that floats always toward the evening star? And did you come over the sea in a silver conch-shell?’

Then the prince sat down by her side,

and told her that he came from a beautiful country beyond the sea; that his name was Prince Lillyheart; that his father was a great king, and of the splendors of his court; that he was the only son, and was traveling all over the world to find a beautiful maiden for his wife. Mousie couldn't understand all this at first, but Prince Lillyheart thought it the most charming thing in the world to teach her, and so they got along very well.

“Mousie invited the beautiful stranger to go to her home, and as they walked together her white feet scarcely touched the sand, that never looked so golden—the sun never shone so kindly, the air never seemed so balmy, the waves never danced so merrily before. The soul of Mousie sprang into life under the touch of the white fingers that caressed her golden hair.

“So they went to the little hut, but the

prince never thought how mean and lowly it was, for the blue-eyed maiden with the girdle of sea-shells glorified it with her presence, and he loved her more and more every hour. He painted beautiful pictures of her as she stood in the door of the hut under the shadow of the tangled vines; as she flew over the beach like some golden-winged spirit of the winds; and as she lay dreaming in her gem-lined grotto, he would take his guitar and sing to her the most enchanting melodies of his own land, where the flowers never faded and the birds never ceased to sing; of the unequaled splendors of his father's court, and the delights that awaited him on his return; and Mousie smiled in innocent wonder.

“Then he looked into her deep blue eyes and sang of love; sang of the true heart he offered her, over which she should reign more than a queen, the eyes that would

always look to heaven through hers, the hand that should give her every blessing and shield her from every harm. Then, for the first time in Mousie's life, a rosy blush stole over her face, she veiled her blue eyes with her golden lashes, placed her little white hand in that of Prince Lillyheart, and went with him to the land of flowers.

“They sailed for many a day in a beautiful ship, with silken sails and ropes of golden cord, till at last they began to smell the perfumed air and knew they were approaching the summer-land; and presently the glittering turrets of the king's city came in sight, and Prince Lillyheart could have danced for joy at thought of the beautiful princess he should give his people, and how his father would rejoice at his lovely bride.

“When the people saw the ship of Prince

Lillyheart in the harbor, they knew that he had brought his bride, and the whole city rejoiced. They hastened to prepare for her; spread a carpet of cloth of gold all the way from the water's edge to the steps of the king's palace, where he sat on his throne cut from one large pearl, waiting to receive her, and the little children strewed the golden carpet thick with flowers; they raised a canopy of flowers to shield her from the sun, but left it so that all could gaze on the most royal lady in the world, —for such they knew must be the chosen of Prince Lillyheart.

“ But they never dreamed of such a vision of loveliness as greeted them when Mousie stepped on shore. The prince had chosen to present her to his father as he first saw her, and she was clad in her simple white dress, with her girdle of sea-shells, and not a jewel adorned her, but her hair

‘Fell adown

Her shoulders, and went rippling o’er her dress—
That seemed made up of sea-foam—like a shower,
A flood, a cataract of amber gold.’

“The people eagerly snatched up the flowers her bare white feet had crushed, and they murmured under their breath as though an angel walked among them.

“You may be sure Prince Lillyheart was proud enough to see the way his people welcomed his bride, and he walked by her side uncovered, his white plumes trailing to the earth, through the street—up the broad jasper steps—into a saloon more gorgeous than I can tell—and the presence of the proud king.

“The king had expected to see a beautiful princess, clad in richest raiment and covered with rarest jewels, and so that she pleased his beloved son, was prepared to give her a royal welcome. But when he saw them approach the throne, he arose

from his seat, came down to meet them, and kneeling before Mousie touched his lips to the hem of her garment.

“Surprise and wonder was on every face, and seeing it, he said :—

“*‘All men bow to kings ; but a pure woman is the most exalted thing on earth ; even kings do homage to her.’*

“So Mousie lived very happy in the kingdom of eternal bloom, and everybody, from the old king down to the beggar at the gate, loved her very much ; and when the king died, she and Lillyheart were king and queen—and what more could you ask ? so kiss me, and go to bed.”

“Oh, that beautiful, *beautiful* story, Uncle Joe,” murmured Allie, and every one felt that somehow they were better for having heard it.

“But the pipe, Uncle Joe,” cried John-

nie, suddenly. "You haven't told about the pipe and the goblin."

"Sure enough! that didn't come in, did it? May be it will to-morrow night, though; we'll try, at any rate."

And sure enough, the next night, when Johnnie had performed the mystic rites, it all came out about the pipe, and this was the way of it:—

"King Lillyheart and his sweet little queen reigned for many years over that beautiful land, but they learned that though it is very nice to have every thing you can wish for, it is not the easiest thing in the world to be a king. I suppose the Kingdom of Flowers was about as easy to govern as any other, but it takes all sorts of people to make a kingdom as well as a world, and there always are people that think one man knows as much as another man—and more too. And about a dozen

of his wise old counselors thought they were, individually, that one, and so they would have some lively times.

“One old big-wig wanted to have the vespers chimed on Canterbury Bells, and another thought Blue Bells the most appropriate. One old wise-head wrote twelve volumes to prove that the maids of honor should wear shoes of sandal wood, and an equally positive old codger insisted that Ladies’ Slippers were the only things to be thought of. And so they worried poor Lillyheart, till at last one day Mousie discovered a *white hair* in the midst of his dark curls.

“Such a catastrophe! something must be done right away; and Mousie’s loving heart invented many a pastime to beguile the mind of her beloved from his cares of State. Her gentle efforts partially succeeded, for nothing could win him for a

moment from his devotion to her; but he loved his people, and was so anxious to do right in all things, that he could not entirely throw off care, and at length—Mousie found another white hair.

“Things were getting desperate now, and Mousie sat down and cried one minute—then sat and thought two minutes—then ran to Lillyheart and kneeling before him, said :—

“‘A boon! a boon! my king.’

“‘Speak, my bright one, but do not kneel to me.’

“‘I have never knelt before, for Lillyheart is my husband, and my wishes have been granted before they were formed. This time I crave a boon, not of my husband, but of Lillyheart the king.’

“‘Speak on, my beloved, and, as a king, will I grant the boon before it is asked.’

“‘Give me a ship built of ivory, with

silken sails and ropes of golden cord ; give me a hundred boatmen, clad in green and gold, and give me leave to sail back to the mossy grotto in the rocky dell. When the moon for the third time dips her horn in the crystal sea, I will stand at your palace door again.'

"Then the king kissed her a thousand times, gave her the beautiful ship and every thing she asked for, and let her sail over the blue sea alone, for he knew that nowhere on earth could harm befall such innocence and purity.

"Then Mousie sailed many days till she reached the rocky cove, and leaving all her boatmen behind, she went alone toward the old grotto. As she walked along, the sunlight shone on her white raiment and golden hair, and the simple old fishermen said:—'An angel is walking on the beach.'

And the shoemaker's and fisherman's wives said : 'I think so too.'

"So she sat down in the grotto and called 'Emeraldine' three times. Then she heard again the same delightful music she had listened to years before, and up from the water rose a shoal of silver fish, drawing after them a pearly shell with a rosy lining, in which sat the daintiest creature a mortal ever looked at. She was no bigger than a humming-bird, but the most perfect in form and feature. Her dress was of palest sea-green, and over her shoulders hung a scarf of morning mist, fringed with dewdrops. The only jewel she wore was a lovely *smile*, and the golden wand in her hand was tipped with a star.

"This radiant creature stepped from her fairy bark, and seating herself in a niche of the grotto, said :—

“ ‘I am the Peri’s daughter. How can I serve you?’

“Then Mousie told her the dreadful story of finding *two* white hairs in Lillyheart’s head; that she should break her heart if she couldn’t find something to soothe his mind; and begged the sprite to remember her promise and help her now. The Peri heard her story through, and then said, with a happy smile:—

“ ‘Purest of women—most excellent of wives—your wish shall be granted.’

“Then waving her golden scepter over the shining sand, a place sunk down, forming a large basin, the water flowed in, and calling to her silver fish, she bade them enter this miniature sea and do her will. The next wave carried the fish into the basin, and then began the merriest scene you ever saw. They frolicked and gambled about, over and under each other,

playing all sorts of pranks that ever a fish did, till they lashed the mimic sea into a perfect foam. Then stamping her tiny foot, she cried:—

“ ‘Glaucus, appear!’ and suddenly there appeared before them the most singular creature imaginable. He looked—but there is his goblin face on the front of my pipe, so I need not describe it. Did you ever see any thing more hideous? Mousie was frightened, and drew nearer to the Peri, who said:—

“ ‘Fear not, Mousie, no one has power to harm you in my presence. And this Glaucus, hideous as he appears, would never wish to, if he had the power. He is one of the spirits of the brooks and streams, and so of lower rank than we, whose mother is queen of the sea. Glaucus saw me long ago, and loved me—and I confess that I did not despise him—much to the dis-

pleasure of my royal mother, who, to punish his audacity, bade him wear that horrid form. My tears, however, have softened her, till she has consented to let him lay it aside, and wed me, provided I can contrive any way to make the unsightly shell useful to benefit mankind. So now I can redeem my promise to you—lift the cloud from your husband's brow—and go back to my coral palace, in the arms of my lover.'

"So saying, she took the thick foam in her tiny little hands, and put it all over the goblin's head and face; pressing it down hard, and molding every feature carefully, at the same time murmuring words of tenderness and hope. When her task was completed, she touched his head with her starry wand—just where you touch him with a match—and forth sprang a beautiful spirit, like a young god in form

and feature, who took his place by the side of Emeraldine. Taking up the cast-off shell, which was now hard and smooth, the Peri gave it into Mousie's hand, saying:—

“ ‘When King Lillyheart is weary or troubled, fill this pipe with sweet-scented leaves, place fire on top, and bid him smoke it. It will solace and comfort him, when all else fails. And now adieu.’ And with her ransomed lover she stepped into her pearly shell, and disappeared beneath the waves.

“ Mousie returned with the fairy gift to her husband's kingdom, and found that its virtues even exceeded her expectations. No matter how troubled, worried, or anxious Lillyheart might be, what weighty cares oppressed him, or how vexing the disputes he had to settle, Mousie would steal softly to his side with his enchanted

pipe, and his troubles would 'all end in smoke.' But death comes to all; so, after many years, Mousie veiled her blue eyes for the last time; her golden hair was smoothed over her last pillow; and King Lillyheart, unable to endure a world where she was not, put off his jeweled crown to lay in the dust beside her. He gave his pipe—the very one I hold in my hand—to his best friend, and it fell from one to another, until I bought it of a deep-eyed artist in Germany, who painted his soul into a bit of canvas, and starved for bread. That's all we'll see to-night." And Uncle Joe knocked the ashes from the enchanted pipe, that was an object of veneration to the children ever after.

CHAPTER IV.

So WEEKS and months went by, and Inglenook grew more beautiful every day. The flowers and vines, aided by Johnnie's faithful watering, grew wonderfully; and the strange-looking people that passed along the road would look at the cabin in wondering admiration, and would almost invariably stop to rest in the shade, or ask for a drink of water, in order to have a nearer look at the unwonted scene.

The mother and children were never tired of looking at the different kinds of men who would go past on their way to the "diggins." Miners from all sorts of places, in all sorts of grotesque costumes; Spaniards, Italians, Indians, and Chinamen,

these last affording the family unbounded amusement. Their queer-shaped hats, and long, braided cues, interfered sadly with the lessons sometimes; for this good mother was determined that, as a school was impossible, her children should have the benefit of her own excellent education. And so they had their daily lessons, their hour or two of working in the garden early in the morning or toward evening, and, though deprived of a great many comforts they had been accustomed to, they grew up as good as one might expect under such home-training, and were as happy as they were good. But there are always clouds above this world, and I'll tell you how the first cloud settled over Inglenook.

You know I told you, in the first part of the story, that Mr. Blythe and Uncle Joe were concerned in one of the mines,

a mile or so from their home, but, like hundreds of others, could not work for want of water. The ditch was all ready for the water to pass through, but no rain came, and months went by before they had done a single day's work. By economizing their means, however, and by the help of their hunting, they managed to get along without getting in debt, and by and by the rain came.

The ditch, in its windings, went past the cabin, a rod or two from the door, and it was a new play for the children to throw sticks into the water, as it went dashing past, and send Carlo after them. He liked the sport as much as they did, and would emerge from the stream shaking his dripping sides, ready for another plunge.

One day Johnnie went with his father and Uncle Joe to the mines. He was in great spirits, you may be sure, for now he

was actually going to dig for gold with his own hands. He had already decided how he should dispose of his earnings. He would give his mother and sisters each a quarter of it, and send the other quarter to old nurse Margaret.

Our Johnnie was generous as the sun. When they went off in the morning, he whistled for Carlo to go with him. But Carlo declined the invitation. He coaxed, and coaxed, but all to no purpose. Carlo had made up his mind to stay at home, and Carlo's mind was like the law of the Medes and Persians, there was no altering it. So Johnnie went out under the vine-clad door, and the little sisters ran out to kiss him once more, for he was to be gone, *all day*.

He worked as faithfully as either of his "partners" that day, and with better "luck," as the miners call it, for, along in

the afternoon, what should he turn up with his pick but a solid lump of bright, shining gold, as large as a walnut. I said he had better luck than the others, for, though they dug more gold that day than he did, it was not in such a large piece, and didn't delight them half as much as his did. It was decided that, as they had all done so well, and Johnnie was so eager to tell his mother and sisters, they should "clean up" and go home earlier than usual. So, about the middle of the afternoon, they came in sight of home, and Johnnie ran ahead with his joyful news. But how had the day been spent at home?

After Johnnie's departure, the little girls had settled down on the fur rug to learn their lessons, with Carlo between them. They had long ago given up all hope of teaching him to read, but he still continued an "honorary member" of the school.

The lessons were learned and recited so well, that they received two kisses instead of one from mamma, and then the little girls donned their hats and ran out to play, accompanied by Carlo and Betsey. They played one thing and another, and finally began throwing chips and sticks into the ditch. In an unlucky moment, Della lost her footing, and plunged headlong into the water. There was an unusually strong head of water on that day, and it went tearing along with tremendous force, and in an instant the bright little head went drifting away, away, with the notes of her mother's song still ringing in her ears.

Carlo did not take to the water, but went flying along the bank at lightning speed, followed by poor Alice's tottering steps, her face as white as the dead, and too much paralyzed with terror, even to cry out. Unheeding where she went, she



stumbled over a stone, her little white face went down into the dust, and she lay there without motion, like a broken lily.

But Carlo's motions were much quicker than my pen. He sped along the bank till he got ahead of the drowning child, then plunged in and caught her as she was floating past him. The bank at that point was too steep for him to climb up with his burden, so with an instinct almost amounting to reason, he braced himself against the current and swam up the stream to where the bank was lower, and with a great effort, he sprang on the shore with the lifeless child. Her weight, even with the addition of her dripping garments, was nothing to his huge strength, and in another moment he laid his precious burden at the mother's feet.

I can not undertake to tell you how that mother felt, with not a soul near to aid her,

trying, with frantic eagerness, every possible means to restore her darling to life. It is no wonder that she failed to notice even the strange absence of Allie, so intent was she upon her task. At length her efforts were rewarded. Della's consciousness returned, she spoke a few words to her mother, then sank into a quiet slumber. She was saved. The mother, in her deep thankfulness, involuntarily turned to the daughter who always could sympathize with her—but where *was* Allie?

With a sinking heart the mother hastened out, and with a startling cry, she flew to where the little form lay prostrate in the dust. Hour after hour the almost broken-hearted mother hung over her sweet child, using every remedy her little store afforded, and when Johnnie bounded in with his good news, one sister lay sleeping calmly, and the other had just awakened from the

swoon that was so like death. Faint and feeble was the spark of life, but it *was* life, and they all wept tears of thankfulness.

The next day, Della was as well as ever and frolicked about with Carlo, but Allie never played in the sunshine again.

It fell slowly, but no less surely, this first dark shadow upon Inglenook. Long they hoped, even against hope, that each succeeding day would bring to that little form its wonted strength, but months went by, and still the little white face lay patiently upon the pillow. Allie had received some internal injury, and the excessive terror working upon her very delicate constitution, had rendered it incurable. There was no physician for miles around, so medical advice was impossible; but as she suffered little or no pain, they gave her the most tender and watchful care, and hoped for the best.

One corner of their tiny mansion was appropriated to the sufferer—by the southern window, where *her* roses grew—and the spot seemed almost holy in its purity, a fitting shrine for so gentle a spirit. I have not stopped to chronicle all the little changes and improvements that had taken place about the house, but this southern window had been added at the suggestion of Johnnie, who thought Allie's roses should come into the house as well as his morning glories. And so this place seemed naturally to belong to her; and Johnnie remembers to this day, how she would turn her little pale face to him with her sweet smile, and murmur:—

“Dear, *dear* Johnnie; it is so nice that I can smell the roses, lying here; and they always make me think of you.”

Her couch, and every thing about her, was white as snow, and love invented

many beautiful devices to help while away her often weary hours. Every flower that could be found lent its beauty and fragrance to brighten Allie's lot ; and she had quite a little cabinet of minerals, and unique curiosities, for the miners, far and near, knew of the sweet child, and searched among their rough stores for some offering for the "Lily of Inglenook."

Such heavenly patience as this dear child possessed, had its influence on the whole family. The mother's face grew more tender and lovely under the shade of sorrow, and as a poet once said, very beautifully—"there were tears in her voice." Della was still the same little roguish, dimpled thing as ever, but she seemed to have lost her babyhood, and to have acquired more of Allie's quiet, careful spirit. She would still romp with Carlo, but it would be after she had sat for hours on a little stool by Allie's

couch, trying to sew. To be a help to mamma and Allie was the greatest ambition of our little Rosebud.

Johnnie was, about the house, like a fresh cool breeze in a summer day. His bright, strong, true nature was the greatest comfort to his mother; she could always rely on him, *he never failed her*. And he possessed such a true courtesy that, in all their lives, his little sisters never received a harsh or angry word from him. He was not wasting his days now, you may be sure. Up in the morning with the first gleam of light, he was at his books, and after helping his mother all he possibly could with getting and clearing away the breakfast, would recite his lessons; after that, if there was nothing more he could do, he would go to the mine to work with his father and Uncle Joe. He was never allowed to go to the village, or "camp," as

they were called in those days, for there were scenes of drunkenness and violence there, which made it no place for such as he.

CHAPTER V.

ONE day—this was more than a year after the events narrated in the last chapter—Allie lay on her snow-white couch, like some beautifully-carved image, wrapped in a gentle slumber; the light wind swayed the branches of the climbing roses at the window by her side, and perfumed with their breath her silken hair. Della had gathered fresh roses and dainty white flowers, and had stolen with noiseless steps to strew them over the couch and pillow, to give a sweet surprise to the beloved sister when she should awaken; then with Carlo she had gone out into the shadow of the trees to play, and the mother being just outside the back-door, washing, Allie was sleeping alone.

Suddenly a form appeared in the doorway—a woman—tall and dark, with black eyes that blazed with light when she raised her long lashes, and clothed in garments that had once been rich and costly, but now were stained and soiled with travel. She had pushed back the dark veil that enveloped her head, and the curious gold pins that had confined her hair, falling out, it fell in wonderful richness half way to the floor.

For an instant she stood on the threshold, seemingly lost in wondering surprise, then an expression of reverence and awe stole over her face, and with cautious steps she approached the sleeper, and stretching out her arms in a supplicating attitude, she sank upon her knees beside the couch. Then she began to rock slowly to and fro, pressing her lips to the fringed coverlet of the bed, and murmured some words over, and over in

a strange tongue. Growing more earnest in what was evidently an act of devotion, she drew from her bosom a rosary, and began telling her beads.

Over and over the mysterious words were muttered, sometimes with an energy almost amounting to wildness, and then sinking lower into a wail of despair; but always with hushed breath as though some terror of the past seemed to hang above her soul.

Suddenly rising, she reverently laid her rosary on Allie's bosom—as she would have laid an offering on the shrine of a saint—gathered her veil about her, and with the luster of her fierce eyes dimmed with unshed tears, passed out as lightly as she had entered.

Great was the surprise of the mother, when she came softly in to see if her darling slept, to find this strange ornament

upon her bosom. The cry of astonishment that burst from her lips awakened Allie, and together they wondered over the strange event. When the miners returned home, the wonderful story was told to them, and the rosary examined with much curiosity. The beads were of the clearest, purest amber, like globes of golden sunshine, and the cross was of solid gold, heavily enameled with black. In the center was an arabesque design that looked like a cypher or initial, but no one could make out what it was. It was hung up near Allie's couch, where she could look at it, and as no amount of wondering could solve the mystery, they soon ceased to wonder.

One day the mother sat plying her busy needle, and teaching her little hindering helper, Della, how to "overcast," when Allie suddenly spoke, after a long silence:—

"Mamma, dear, I want to do something, too, can't I mend?"

"My precious darling," said the mother, kissing her pale hands, "what could you do with those poor little fingers?"

"I don't know, mamma, not much, I suppose, but I'd like to try to do something. You know—" and the sweet voice faltered a little. .

"What is it my treasure? Tell your mother every thing."

"I don't want to grieve you, dear mother, but you know I never shall be of any use all my life—"

"Oh, don't say so, my precious one," said the mother, quickly, "you are of more use to us than we could tell. What could we all do without our little angel?"

"That is because you all love me so, darling mother. It makes you all happier to do something for me, does it not?"

"Indeed it does, Allie Blythe," broke in Della, in her hearty, impulsive way.

"Then think how happy I should be if my hands could do something for you. Coax mamma, pet sister, to teach me how to use these little idlers," and she held up two little hands that might be snow-flakes, only for the tiny blue veins beneath the surface.

"Mamma needs no coaxing, Allie, for any thing that will add to your happiness," answered Mrs. Blythe. "Don't vex your little head with thinking, my love; I will study over all the pretty things I have learned, and see what will suit you best."

The next morning the mother brought out, from many a little corner of their huge boxes, some nice sheets of tissue-paper of different colors, and all the bits of card or pasteboard she could find. Propping Allie as near upright as she was able to be, with

pillows, she commenced the pleasant task of teaching the fairy fingers to be useful. The cards were cut and trimmed into proper shape, and fitted together to form little boxes, and then ornamented with tissue-paper, fringed, curled, braided, or made into flowers, and you have no idea what charming little things they were. This simple employment proved to be a great blessing to Allie, as it occupied her mind, thus drawing it away from her sad condition; it also enabled her to indulge her loving kindness, for she made pretty boxes for every one of the family; it gave her an opportunity to exercise her taste, and carry out many a pretty fancy, and beautified her in still another way, which I will tell you by and by.

She soon used up her slender stock of material, and the mother searched among her treasured magazines for tissue leaves,

for nothing was a sacrifice that added to Allie's happiness.

A teamster stopped at the door one hot, dusty day, to ask for a drink of water, and while the mother was getting it, he stood watching Allie's dainty fingers, as with a tiny pair of scissors she was notching a rose leaf. His words of admiration were so genuine, and so really gentle, in spite of his rough tones and rougher dress, that it won the child's confidence, and she readily consented, when proud little Della wanted to display her treasures to the stranger. He handled them as daintily as possible with his huge hands, and told Della "if she should go down to 'Frisco, with her red cheeks and bright eyes, and peddle those gimcracks, they would bring more than their weight in gold." Della laughed at the idea of her being a peddler, and the teamster turned to go away.

Allie whispered eagerly in her mother's ear, and Mrs. Blythe followed him to the door, and ascertained that he was on his way to San Francisco, and expected to return some time the next week. She asked him if he would do a favor for her, to gratify her sick child, to which, of course he said, "yes," for no Californian ever yet refused to do a favor for a woman or child. She then wrote down a list of the material that was needed, not forgetting some gold paper, which was the desire of Allie's heart, gave him some gold dust to pay for them, and he departed.

To make a long story short, he returned the next week, with every thing required, and added, on his own account, that "he had looked round among the stores some, and thought there was a right smart chance for a trade, and if they was a mind—he was coming round that way in about an-

other month—he would take what they had ready, down to the city, and try to sell them.”

Allie's eyes fairly danced with pleasure, and she cried out, “Oh, mamma, may be I can be of some use after all,” and there was something in her tone that made that rough man go to the door and halloo “whoa” to the horses, although they were standing perfectly still, and blow his nose as if he would take it off.

He was as good as his word. When the month came round he was on hand, and ten beautiful little boxes were awaiting him. They were safely packed in a handbox, and this was put into the box under the seat of his wagon, and Allie's first merchandise went to market. On his return, he placed a round yellow “twenty” in the hand of the delighted child, and when she wanted to thank him, he pressed

her little white hands to his bearded lips, and muttered something about his little Mary up in heaven. Allie's trade went steadily on after this, but the crowning glory of it deserves another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE pecuniary success of the Blythes had been thus far so satisfactory that they had kept even with the world, notwithstanding the enormous prices which they were obliged to pay for every thing. Every Californian is familiar with the history of gold-mining in those days. A half-starved, half-clothed man, after working perhaps for months and only finding gold enough to keep him half-frenzied with the hope of success, in a moment of deepest despair, perhaps "strikes a pocket," and in a day's time counts his money by thousands. Then, perhaps, thoughts of his home and family would cross his mind, but alas! many and fearful were the gulfs that lay

between the mine and the deck of the steamer that should carry him to his fire-side. His natural manhood was unnerved by months, perhaps years, of toil and exposure, and he could not pass the bar with its glittering temptations; then the fatal green-baize of the gambling-table would prove such a field of enchantment, that another month would see the poor fellow shoulder his pick and start for "better diggings." There were always "better diggings" just ahead; that was one of the delusions on this road to fortune, and often proved the most delusive of all. It was well said of California, in the days of '49—which expression includes all of its earlier years—that the motto of the State should be

"A pickax and a spade,—

A spade, ay, and a winding-sheet."

But you will readily perceive how the

Blythes—including, of course, Uncle Joe and his pipe—were shielded from the thousand temptations that beset the less favored ones around them. They dug for gold, like the rest, felt the fever of hope and the pangs of disappointment in their pursuit of fortune, but when night came, their minds were restored to the proper tone and level by the pure, unchanging influence of Inglenook.

When they left home in the morning, the sweet, fresh kisses of the children were holy talismans upon their lips, and no impure thing might sully them. And to enter the home of Allie Blythe, with the thought of a debasing or unworthy action in their minds, was simply impossible. In after-years, Allie could see through what dark paths, and over what frightful chasms, her little hands led those loved ones in safety—how many times they were turned

aside from footfalls and dangers that they knew not of, as by an angel's hand,—she saw all this, I say, but it was after her eyes were opened to a clearer life than ours. At present she lay on her pillows, her thin white fingers busy with the pretty work that was now doubly interesting to her, for it was shaping itself into the fulfillment of an idea—a pet scheme that her loving heart had dictated, her quick brain developed, and left her nimble fingers to execute.

What was Allie's secret, that made her eyes glisten so beautifully, and the lovely pink color come and go in her white cheek, till she rived, for the time, her own blush-roses that had now climbed in at her window? And, strange to say, the knowing little smiles would pull at the corners of her mouth whenever John Brewster, the teamster, held a confidential chat with her

on his return from the city. There was some secret understanding between them, that was certain, but, as even the dear mother and the pet sister were kept in ignorance, we must not betray her. Wait and see.

Suppose three years to have passed, now, since the opening of our story, and our friends, the same unbroken circle, sit enjoying the cool evening breeze, after the toil and heat of the day. It is the dry season now, and the hill-sides all around lie parched and brown, but their very dreariness brings out the bright beauties of Inglenook all the plainer, as the dun background behind a lovely picture; for the verdure around Inglenook was not allowed to fade: the mother's care and Johnnie's watering prevented that.

The doors and windows were all open, and the silver moonlight flooded the room,

giving the most beautiful light possible for their social chat, and the smoke of Uncle Joe's pipe mingled, not unpleasantly, with the breath of Allie's roses. The family circle was increased to-night by the presence of John Brewster, who often had business detaining him a day or two in the village beyond, and whose greatest delight was to pass an hour or two of the evening at Inglenook.

"Father, what shall we do with our Johnnie?" asked Mrs. Blythe, as with the much-loved motion, she stroked the curly head that rested against her knee. "He is growing beyond his teacher. He has mastered all the history and mathematics my knowledge-box contains, and, like Oliver Twist, he is asking for more"

"Sure enough," answered Mr. Blythe, "I had about forgotten how fast he was growing. We must decide upon something for

our little man. What shall it be, Johnnie? You are thirteen years old, and shall have a voice in the matter."

"Oh, father, if I could only go to school a few years," replied Johnnie, eagerly, and then added, more sadly, "but I know how impossible that is in this country."

"I presume there are schools in San Francisco," said Uncle Joe; "though I've not been there lately, nor made any inquiries."

"I think they have no colleges yet," said Mrs. Blythe, "and even if they had, it is so far from home, and besides, I am afraid—"

"Oh, I never hoped to go through college, mother," answered Johnnie, "but if I could only go to some good school a few years, to learn book-keeping, and such things, to fit me for a merchant. I would so like to be a merchant, father."

"I approve of your choice, my son," replied his father, "and will do all in my power to help you."

"If it wasn't so far," said the mother, with the least possible faltering in her tones, "if it wasn't so far, we might make inquiries."

If any one had looked at Allie then, they would have noticed the excited glitter of her eyes, as she looked eagerly at John Brewster, and the flutter of her little hands seemed to caution even while they urged him to speak. But no eyes happened to be turned that way except one corner of John's, and that arch-hypocrite spoke up now, as though the thought had just occurred to him.

"If you've a mind that way, squire, I think I know just the thing that'll suit you. I've got a sister down in 'Frisco,—keeps a lodging-house—as is a widow, the

widow Sumner, which her man died two years ago. Not being in the business long, her things is mostly new, is not so very stylish as some, and she's a tidy little body, is my sister Peggy. Well, she's got an old man a roomin' in her house, as is perfectly wonderful how much he knows. He has traveled all over the earth, trading, mostly in his own ships, but now in his old age he has got nothing left, and wants to get some boys to teach."

"That begins to look possible," said Mr. Blythe, "for I have great confidence in your judgment, John, but there is still one drawback. Joe and I have invested almost every dollar of our funds in that claim we bought of Jones last month. If we had enough now for the first half-year's expenses, outfit and all, I think we would let him go, eh, mother? We could trust our Johnnie, could'nt we?"

"I could trust my boy anywhere," said the fond mother, looking down into the flushed, hopeful face of her darling son.

"I do not like to leave my home, mother," said Johnnie, "but I shall be a man before long, and I want to be ready. As father thinks it would be well, I should *so* like to go."

"You shall go, Johnnie," broke in a sweet voice from the couch—"You *shall* go, brother, I knew it all the time. See, papa, mamma, this is all mine,"—and she drew a little box from among her pillows, containing her hoarded gold—"I earned it all. I knew Johnnie would want to go to school some time, and I wanted to help him *so* much. You'll use it, won't you, papa? I want to be of some use, and I'll be so proud of our darling Johnnie."

Mr. Blythe took the little treasure-box in silence, and looked upon his child with

a strange look. He knew not what to think or say. The mother let the gentle tears run down her face unchecked, and gazed at the sweet face now pillowed on Johnnie's bosom. Della and Carlo were sound asleep on the floor. Uncle Joe got choked with the smoke, so that he had to wipe his eyes, and Joe Brewster blew his nose louder than ever.

That was Allie's secret !

CHAPTER VII.

“How blessings brighten as they take their flight!” Dearly as Johnnie was loved by all in the family circle, they never knew how much they loved him till the time came for him to leave them. And Inglenook had never looked so lovely to Johnnie’s eyes—his father and uncle had never seemed so dear—his mother and Della so tender and affectionate—or Allie so much like a perfect angel, as on the morning when he was to start for San Francisco in John Brewster’s wagon.

It is a great step in a boy’s life, when he leaves home for the first time—leaves the sheltering palisades of home, and takes his place in the front—to do battle for himself.

Our hero was rather young, it is true—not yet fourteen—to hold the responsibility of his own actions, but circumstances seemed to render it advisable, and it was, after all, but trying his wings a little sooner. A boy must leave home sooner or later, if he would accomplish any thing in this world, and to one who had received the thoroughly good training that Johnnie had, a year or two would matter but little.

There was no need to burden the last of those home-hours with loads of “advice,” to be forgotten the next moment in the excitement of parting. Many parents strive in this way to atone for years of carelessness, if not neglect, by giving very sage advice to their boy, just as he starts away, which, being so *very* new, goes in at one ear and out at the other. Just and pure principles had been instilled into Johnnie’s mind from his earliest childhood. He fully

understood that there was sin, and wrong, and temptation in the world, that *they must be met*, and he must answer to his own soul whether he yielded or conquered.

It is strange how my pen lingers over this parting. It seems sad to part so beautiful a family, for the first time in their lives; and as John Brewster, feeling something as I do about it, fixed and un-fixed his harness three times before he announced it was time to start, so I linger here with a loving fondness, dreading to write "Good-bye."

At length, John Brewster sung out from behind the wagon—you couldn't have got that coward inside the room for any thing—that it was time they were off, if they expected to reach "Hicks's" that night.

"Well, good-bye, little Rosebud," said Johnnie, very bravely, as he took his youngest sister in his arms. "There, there,

don't cry, darling; I'll bring you a big doll, a great deal nicer than Betsey."

"I don't want a doll," sobbed Rosebud, "I want my own Johnnie."

"My son," said his father, taking his hand, "bring me back the same honest hand, as clean and pure from the stain of any unworthy act as it is now. I believe you will, Johnnie—I've great faith in you."

"My darling boy," said his mother, as she pressed her farewell kisses on his lips, "bring me back the same sweet, untainted lips, unsullied by falsehood, profanity or drink." Then leading him to Allie's couch, she added, "Keep this scene ever in your mind, my son, and you can not go far astray."

"My precious brother," said Allie, as she twined her white arms about his neck, and looked into his eyes, "bring me back the

same clear untroubled eyes, through which I can look down into the same pure soul, as into the depths of a crystal brook; let there be no impure thing come between my gaze and the shining sands below. You are going, like a beautiful ship, freighted with our best and highest hopes; you will not shipwreck them, Johnnie?" Allie's earnestness was almost painful to see, in one so fragile; but a glow, almost celestial in its beauty, overspread her sweet face, as she continued, "Oh, no, no, you can not fail us. Angels will watch over your steps, and whisper to your heart when you are in danger."

"Oh, Allie, Allie," cried Johnnie, with great emotion, "if the thought of you does not keep me from evil, then I shall be abandoned indeed," and unclasping her twining arms, he ran out of the room.

"Johnnie, my boy," said Uncle Joe, sud-

denly stepping from behind the big tree, and trying to look very unconcerned, "Johnnie, always be sure that your balance-sheet adds up right, to a fraction.'

"Thank you, Uncle Joe, I'll try," and Johnnie sprang into the seat beside John Brewster, the whip cracked, the wheels started, and our hero had closed the first volume of Life's book, and with high hopes and bounding pulse, was ready to begin the second.

Shall we follow him through it?

Good luck attended our travelers, and the fourth day after leaving home, they arrived in San Francisco. They might have made the journey in three days, but Brewster was in no particular hurry, and Johnnie was a dear lover of nature, so they very often stopped to admire the scenery, and note the changes that had taken place in the last four years.

I would like to tell you of many interesting things that Johnnie saw during that journey, but I fear you would tire of my story before I got through; so we will skip that, and enter the city with our friends. This is really Johnnie's first sight of it, for the little cluster of shanties that stood here four years before, could hardly be called a city.

But now he looked about him with eager interest, as they drove through some of the principal streets. The rude shanties had given place to blocks of neat frame dwellings; the stores were some of them very fine, and some really elegant buildings were in the course of erection.

The streets were thronged with people of all nations, colors, and dress. It would take me too long to describe all the strange people Johnnie saw; he thought he had seen all kinds while in the mountains, but

here, passing along the streets, and gathered about the places of business, were men in strange dresses; that, somehow, seemed to have just stepped out of his school books. He had long been familiar with them there, but it seemed strange to see them walking around. And the number of women added variety to the scene. There were dark-eyed Spanish ladies, with their mantles and veils; Indians, with their blankets and beads; stout, red-armed washer-women, with their bundles; shrewd, keen-looking women, that were in business; a few plainly dressed ladies, with their faces veiled; China women, with their useless feet and queer head-dresses; and any quantity of bold, gaudy-looking ones, who had more money than taste.

But while we have been making these "few remarks," John Brewster has driven steadily on, and finally stopped before a

tidy-looking frame house on Stockton Street. This was where the Widow Sumner, "which was," John Brewster's younger sister, kept

* FURNISHED ROOMS TO LET *

one of which had been engaged for our hero. A sharp ring brought the plump little woman to the door, and the cordial welcome she gave Johnnie took him by surprise, but was none the less pleasing.

"Brother John has told me so much about you, Mr. Blythe, that I seem to know you already," said she, shaking him by the hand as though she meant it. "How is your mother, and father, and that blessed angel that John tells me so much about?"

Mr. Blythe was about to reply, with the increased dignity the title demanded, but the little woman bustled out to a back door, and cried, "Yoppie! Yoppie!!" at the top of her voice, and soon bustled back,

followed by a great overgrown Chinaman, who answered to that musical name. With an unmistakable grunt, he shouldered Johnnie's trunk, and carried it to the top of the second flight, the whole party following, and "Mr." Blythe was shown his apartment. It was a small room, just at the head of the stairs, for Johnnie preferred a very small one alone to sharing a large one with a stranger. It was not very sumptuously furnished, but every thing was almost new, and what was better, was clean, so Johnnie was very well suited with his quarters.

As it was yet early in the afternoon, Johnnie and his friend Brewster walked about the city some, and then returned home to supper, for at the prudent suggestion of Brewster, Johnnie was to board at Mrs. Sumner's, instead of a restaurant, as about every one did. Johnnie had made up his mind to keep a diary for the interest

of the "loved ones at home," and before retiring that night he made the first entry, which proved to be a long one, for he knew how every little thing would interest his loving readers.

At last, with a murmured blessing on "Bonnie Inglenook," and all its inmates, he fell asleep, in spite of the unaccustomed roar and bustle of the city.

The next day, Johnnie made the acquaintance of his teacher, Señor Torras. He was an old man of venerable aspect, though somewhat bowed by care, as well as time. His hair was snow-white, and hung over his shoulders in long curling locks; his beard, too, was white, and with his dark dressing gown wrapped around him, he looked like one of the Patriarchs, just stepped out of a picture. His face was wan and thin, and his clothes poor and threadbare, but always clean and neat as they could be.

There was one peculiar charm about Señor Torras, and that was his voice. Soft and low, as though mellowed by time, and through it a strain of sadness, like the cadence of a past sorrow, yet it was clear as the notes of a bugle, and sometimes Johnnie would hear him singing some quaint old melody, till the little room seemed radiant with the very spirit of music. He had been a great traveler, was still a great scholar, and spoke in almost every known tongue. You will not be surprised when I tell you that Johnnie first pitied, then revered, then dearly loved this fine old man, who, having been rich, honored, and beloved in the strength of his manhood, was now, in his feeble age, dependent on his own labors for subsistence. Never was a teacher more truly and worthily revered and loved.

Johnnie settled down, after a few days, into a regular routine of duties, which his

naturally orderly habits prevented from becoming tiresome. He would arise in the morning and take a long walk over the hills, drinking in the clear, pure air, like an elixir of life, literally feasting on the beauties of nature, when the sun rose in its full beauty—and I think it shines nowhere on earth more brilliantly than through the soft, lambent air of California. But this was a feast of the soul, not the body, and Mr. Johnnie generally managed to bring a good wholesome appetite to the discussion of Mrs. Sumner's nice rolls and coffee. So much did he relish them that, on several occasions, he insisted they were "almost as good as mother's," and Mrs. Sumner understood the compliment.

From breakfast till noon Johnnie spent in his room studying, his whole mind bent upon the task before him, giving heed to nothing outside, except to listen for a mo-

ment to the almost ceaseless footsteps of the Señor as he paced up and down his little room, and wonder, in his generous heart, if his friend was in trouble. After dinner he spent three hours in the Señor's room; but there was no sign of care or weariness on the face of the old man then, He sat down in his old arm-chair—the only bit of luxury his room contained—and went over the day's lessons one by one, his clear, concise explanations making the most intricate problems as simple, as a nursery rhyme, and his wonderful voice turning even the driest science to a pleasant recreation.

Two or three hours were then his own, to go about the city; and he soon fell into the habit of persuading the Señor to go with him, when he found how much the interest of every scene was increased by the amusing and instructive conversation

of his friendly teacher; and he soon observed, too, that these little excursions had a beneficial effect on the lonely old man, as they seemed to divert his mind from his own sorrow, by drawing it in a new channel, and every day cemented the affection that had grown up between these two.

At first the evenings hung heavily on Johnnie's hands, and then most of all was he threatened with that direful disease known as "homesickness." He knew that then the loved ones at home were clustered round Allie's couch, he could tell the very seats they would occupy, and he could give a pretty shrewd guess as to the principal subject of their conversation.

He was sitting in his room one evening dreaming of home: he had extinguished his light, the better to enjoy the soft light

of the moon that streamed in at his windows, and was thinking, with a dewy moisture in his eyes, how calm and beautiful the moonlight lay on the hill-sides about *Inglenook*; how it streamed in the doorway, making a silver mirror of the rude flooring, which reflected the dancing tendrils of the clustering vines around; how it slumbered in the heart of Allie's roses, like her own pure spirit; and with these thoughts the heart of the boy was swelled almost to bursting: and the want of human sympathy seemed too great to be borne. Then, for the first time, he heard Señor Torras singing alone in his room, and his highly wrought sensibilities were in a fit state to be impressed by the music in an unusual manner.

The notes commenced dreamily, as though the singer were unconsciously murmuring some olden melody, rendered

sacred by the seal of memory, and the listener knew the old man's soul had recrossed the yawning chasm of time, and hand in hand with an immortal love, was treading once again the flowery paths of youth. It was a Spanish serenade, that, long years before, he had warbled under the lattice of some dark-eyed Senorita in his own sunny Spain; but the tinkling measure died away into a sigh as memory closed the volume of the past, and laid open the page of the present to his dim eyes.

The Señor was waked from his reverie by a gentle knock at the door; with his usual stately courtesy he arose and opened it, and Johnnie stood bowing upon the threshold. With an apology for the seeming intrusion, he asked the privilege of coming in an hour or two, laughingly adding, that he was threatened with home-

sickness. The Señor welcomed him cordially, and the two sat down in the moonlight, and while the Señor smoked his "hookah"—the only extravagance he indulged in—they chatted of one thing and another till Johnnie had unconsciously told the story of "bonnie Inglenook," and found an admiring listener in the tender-hearted, romance-loving Señor. And so it came about that, for a time, his evenings were spent with his tutor, being the next best to the "sociables" at home.

"In the course of a week or two Johnnie formed a new acquaintance. A young man occupied a room just opposite his, who was callen "Slocum" by his boon companions when they felt very friendly, but when they wished to be "jolly," it was reduced to "Slow," and who rejoiced in the scriptural, as well as peculiarly down-East "given name" of Simeon.

A few words will suffice for a description of Slocum. He was about seventeen years old, came from Maine, was clerk in a wholesale clothing store, and feeling an uncomfortable suspicion of "greenness" hanging over him, he plunged into every dissipation to hide the fact from others.

Meeting often in the narrow hall, these boys—or young men, I suppose, I must call them—soon became acquainted, and one day Slocum invited Johnnie to go with him to the theater. Johnnie had never yet had an opportunity of seeing a play, and he readily consented, adding, with the manly courtesy so natural to him, "if Mr. Slocum would allow him to return the favor at some future time," which Simeon willingly agreed to, it being something new in his experience for anybody to offer to return any favor to him so long as he had any money.

Slocum, as was his custom, took half-price tickets, and they went into the gallery where Johnnie found himself in a rougher crowd than he ever was before. He enjoyed the acting with the enthusiasm of a child, but he felt the natural embarrassment and disgust of a gentleman at the noisy indecorous crowd around him. After that, when he attended the theater, he sat in the dress circle: as this doubled the expense, he did not indulge himself very often, for he thought of the pale little fingers that worked so patiently to help make up his quarterly allowance. But he was not selfish in his pleasures: he shared them with his loved ones by portraying them vividly in his long letters home.

After leaving the theater that first night, the two friends strolled about the streets awhile, till, passing a brilliantly-lighted saloon, Slocum invited him in to get

a cigar. Johnnie Blythe, for the first time in his life, walked into a gambling-house, led by a boyish curiosity to see the place. He was blessed with discretion beyond his years, and though he enjoyed, for a time, the novel sight, it possessed no temptations for him. Simeon offered him a cigar, but disliking the taste of tobacco very much, he declined, for he did not see that he should make himself any more manly by making himself sick.

If Johnnie had been ever so much tempted to join in the unholy orgies going on around him, something that met his gaze as they were wandering around the saloon, would have stopped him as effectually as a flaming sword. It was a little box standing on a marble slab beneath a pier-glass. It was made of delicate enameled card-board, and around the edge ran a tiny vine of myrtle, a cluster of its

blue starry flowers ornamenting the center of the lid. Johnnie looked at it as a shipwrecked mariner might look at a bird that had flown from his own lattice. Carrying it to the bar, he asked the attendant if it was for sale.

"Well, not exactly," he answered carelessly, "but if you fancy it, you can have it for what I paid. A fellow was in here this afternoon, and I bought half a dozen. They are handy to put pencils and cards in for the use of the customers. I haven't had time to fill them yet, so you can take that along."

Johnnie paid the price agreed upon, and he and Simeon started for home, the latter wondering at his eagerness to possess a box so like "women's fixins;" but Johnnie couldn't make up his mind to tell a stranger that it was made by the fingers of his idolized sister, the "Lily of Inglenook."

He resolved to present it to his beloved tutor, who had grown so interested in his darling sister; and, late as the hour was, when he saw a light yet burning in the Señor's room, he rapped at the door, unable, in his boyish eagerness, to wait till morning with his pleasant surprise.

The Señor had been reading late, trying to persuade himself that he was fascinated with his book, but in reality listening for the light footsteps he had learned to love; and when the knock came, the door was readily opened. The old man's face lighted up with a look of pleasure that only they who are unused to kindness can feel; and while he was examining the present, Johnnie turned to leave the room to escape his reiterated thanks. Before he crossed the threshold a strange cry recalled him, and he turned to see the Señor gazing with distended eyes into the now open box.

His left hand was raised above his head with a gesture of fear, and his poor thin face seemed frozen into stone by some apparition of horror, not guilt—but as though a fearful awe had taken possession of him. “*It is the hand of God,*” were the only words that came from his blanched lips.

Stepping nearer to him, Johnnie saw—the amber rosary that was found on Allie’s breast one sweet spring morning, as she lay sleeping under the climbing roses at “bonnie Inglenook.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“BOY, boy, where did you get this rosary? On your soul tell me the truth; and why do you bring it to me in this way?” cried Señor Torras, almost wildly, turning upon Johnnie.

“I will tell you what I know of it, sir, but that is very little. That rosary was found lying on my sister Allie’s bosom, as she lay asleep one day. No one was seen to enter or depart, and how it came there remains a mystery to this day. How it got in this box I can not tell, but suppose it was accidental. I can ascertain, however, by writing home.”

The old man covered his face with his hands for a moment, and then withdrawing them said:—

“I can not comprehend it. Write to them, my son, and ascertain all you can about it.” Then taking Johnnie’s hand kindly, though still with some agitation, he continued :—“Pardon me, my *dear* young friend, if I do not unravel this mystery to you now. It relates to a terrible sorrow of the years that are past, that I thought buried forever in the grave of eternity. But like troubled spirits they come again to haunt me, pitiless of my white hair and tottering steps. Relentless Fate,” he cried, tossing his thin, white hands in intense excitement, “reveal this mystery, or give me peace in death.”

Poor Johnnie was frightened to see his beloved teacher so disturbed, and feel that he was the innocent cause; and he endeavored to soothe him now with words of tender sympathy, urging him to take some rest. The task was easy, though not alto-

gether satisfactory ; for the old man spoke not another word, but passively suffered himself to be led to his bed, then sank upon it as though his faculties were entirely benumbed.

When sorrow, like a mighty wind, blows on the young, they bow before it for a time like the lithe sapling, then of their own elasticity spring upright to defy its power again ; but age, like the hoary oak that has not bowed its lofty head for centuries, falls prostrate to the ground ; majestic still, though fallen ; a monarch, though conquered by a stronger foe.

All night long sat the faithful boy by the side of his aged friend, alone, well knowing how his sensitive nature would shrink from exposure to less friendly eyes. So hour after hour the Señor lay there, motionless and dumb under his great sorrow ; then gradually the sympathetic influ-

ence of the boy melted the stony sharpness of his features into a softened smile of resignation, and he fell into a quiet, natural sleep.

At six o'clock he was still sleeping, and Johnnie went down to his breakfast. Good Mrs. Sumner was bustling around as usual, from the kitchen, where the breakfast was frying and broiling and baking, to the dining-room, where the table was shining in its morning toilet of snowy cloth and pure white dishes. She always did her own cooking, for, she said, "that pesky Chinaman would poison us all with his outlandish dishes and dirt; they might do very well in heathen lands, where nobody pretended to broil steak, but in a Christian country, people would rather know what their hash was made of." So "Yoppie," the big Chinaman, was kept washing, ironing, and scrubbing, and right well he did it, too.

“Good-morning, Mr. Blythe,” rang out her cheerful voice, as Johnnie entered the room, “sit right down here now; I’ll pour your coffee right out, and I’ve got a johnny-cake here that I know will tempt you to eat, and a cutlet that will almost eat itself.”

“Do you think my appetite needs tempting, Mrs. Sumner? Even if I had none once in awhile, which has yet to happen, I should think you would be glad rather than otherwise,” answered Johnny, smiling, as he unfolded his napkin.

“Not a bit of it, sir; the greatest compliment you can pay me is to sit down to my table and eat as though the victuals tasted good. And, bless your heart, don’t I know you was out last night, and so overslept and lost your walk this morning. You must pardon me for taking so much notice of your goings and comings, sir, but you see my own boy would have been just

about your age if he had lived—he died at five years old—a little curly-haired darling—and he was named for his Uncle John—and a better man never walked than John Brewster, if I do say it—and when I see you the mother-blood leaps right up in my heart, and I almost call you *Johnnie*, right out,” and the little woman broke down entirely ; the checked apron went to her face and the great sobs came from the depths of her motherly heart.

Ah ! the “mother-blood” in our hearts ! when once *that* fountain is unsealed, it will flow on forever. The frosty breath of trouble and sorrow can never chill *that* stream, and even the icy touch of guilt can not congeal it. How many hearts can testify that over their lives :—

“ No love like mother-love ever has shone ;
No other worship abides and endures
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours.”

And we who have felt it! Ah? the children little know how very dear they are to the mother's heart. I never see a pair of large deep blue eyes in a baby face—a tiny snow-white hand with blue veins shining through—a halo of yellow ringlets on the head of some mother's beautiful darling—but my heart is ready to burst with mother-love; and I yearn to clasp them to my lonely bosom; for such were mine when my "Golden Hair" blessed the earth with his dainty footsteps. Little children will ever be, to my soul, angels in disguise; for "of such" was my angel boy. It was this feeling, the same in every heart, however lowly the outer form may be, that made the little woman yearn for the poor comfort of calling over her dead boy's name, and Johnnie was true to the voice of nature when he said, looking kindly in her face:—

"That's right, Mrs. Sumner, call me

Johnnie ; it will seem more like home, and the 'sweet little mother' will be glad to hear I am so well taken care of. Now give me a nice cup of coffee and a piece of toast for the Señor ; he is not well this morning, and will not be down," and as he was leaving the room with a little tray laden with a tempting breakfast, he added:—

"Please don't disturb him to-day ; he needs nothing but rest ; I will take care of him."

Señor Torras wakened as Johnnie entered, and ate his breakfast silently, as though he had hardly collected his thoughts ; then he arose, dressed himself carefully as usual, and, except that he was unusually quiet and preoccupied through the day, there was little or no change in him. Johnnie brought his books and sat in the Señor's room that day, though no word was spoken except about the lessons, and his silent

sympathy was just what the old man wanted. After a day or two events flowed on in their natural channel; a letter from Inglenook informed them that the rosary was placed in the box accidentally, and no one had missed it; Johnnie handed the letter to the Señor, who read it in silence, and the subject was never spoken of again.

CHAPTER IX.

I MUST skip over about a year, now, or I never shall yet through my story. Things at Inglenook went on more quietly than is usual in this most changeable of all countries. The mine that Mr. Blythe and Uncle Joe had bought just before Johnnie went from home, proved to be a very good one, and they now employed quite a little army of workmen; they all boarded in the village, however, for the peace and serenity of that dearest of all homes must not be disturbed. Some additions had been made to the house; a kitchen was first built; then, as the family became known—and wherever they were known the story of the “broken lily” went to

every heart—kind-hearted, though often unpolished, people came from far and near to see them, and soon another apartment was added, and called a parlor; its object was, that strangers should not intrude upon Allie. Sweet Allie Blythe still lay upon her white couch beside the southern window; still the climbing roses bloomed about the casement, but now in such profusion that she might literally have slept on a “bed of roses,” if she had chosen; still that household looked into her soft brown eyes and knew that “of such” is the kingdom of heaven; still the mother murmured in the depths of her heart, with almost a feeling of adoration, the beautiful verses of the poet:—

“She never was a child to us,
We never held her being’s key;
We could not teach her holy things;
She was Christ’s self in purity.”

“Rosebud” still learned her lessons and frolicked with Carlo, grew taller and older—she was now almost six—but found it difficult to grow any rosier. She still occupied Uncle Joe’s knee at the evening sociables, and had the lion’s share of the stories, when he was there; but Uncle Joe had roved about too many years to settle down all at once, and he would occasionally take a tramp over the mountains, “to find out,” he said, “how perfectly happy he was at home.”

In the course of this year, too—that I’m not going to tell you about—Johnnie made a visit to his home; but you needn’t expect me to describe that. Why, I couldn’t do it if Mr. Roman was to offer to print it in gold and bind it in velvet. Let all my lady readers imagine themselves the mother or sister of such a dear precious Johnnie—if I have any gentlemen readers,

let them suppose they were the father or uncle—and let all my young gentlemen fancy themselves Johnnie Blythe, with *such* a home and family to go to, and you have the whole story. But my poor pen must be more accustomed to happiness before it can portray it.

Johnnie had made rapid progress in his studies, especially in book-keeping; he was bound to be a merchant, and put his whole soul into any thing that would tend to assist him in that business. His father had told him to lay a good solid foundation in the way of study, then serve an apprenticeship by way of practice, and when he was ready to begin the world on his own hook he should have the biggest nugget in the claim. But Johnnie, thanking him heartily for his offer, told him that "*his* heroes were all self-made men, and, if they all pleased, he would rather climb the lad-

der himself; at least he would make the trial, and if he failed, why, there was 'Blytheheart' to fall back on."

Perhaps you think that nobody felt any additional pride in the young man after he had "expressed himself"? Then you ought to have heard Uncle Joe say, as he took his pipe out of his mouth:—

"Give us your hand, John Blythe. I wish you was my son instead of my nephew."

Well, this year that we are skipping over passed away, and Johnnie wrote home that he had been offered a situation. Mr. McBride, proprietor of the wholesale clothing store in which Simeon Slocum was clerk, being in want of a competent book-keeper, and having heard Simeon's frequent eulogies of Johnnie, had offered him the situation, after several confidential interviews with John Brewster. Father

and mother readily consented, and Johnnie Blythe placed his feet upon the first round of the ladder which reaches to—whatever we most desire; which round proved to be the slats on a high stool in McBride & Co.'s counting-room.

About three months after this change had taken place, our friends at Inglenook received an unexpected visit from a most interesting person. It was quite early in the day; the men had gone to their work some hours before, and Mrs. Blythe had "tidied up" Allie's room the first thing, as she always did; the low table was placed beside her couch, holding the materials for her pretty work—she was now engaged in arranging leaves and foliage in artistic groups on card-board; several beautiful specimens already adorned the walls—and "Rosebud" was seeking for a few late flowers to brighten

up the evergreen in Allie's vases, when the quick tramping of a horse was heard at the door, and the rider leaped to the ground with a bound that shook the house almost.

"Stand, Bonita!" said a clear ringing voice, and a figure flashed across the threshold like a shooting star, or some bright tropical bird.

Flashed is the right word to use, for nothing else would express at the same time her quick graceful motion, and dazzling appearance.

This apparition was a woman, about nineteen years of age; tall, and most magnificently proportioned; her complexion was dark, but clear as amber; and on her cheek

"The blood,

The fiery blood, came leaping up like rich
Old wine in a gold-tinted goblet."

She was dressed in a long, black riding skirt, and a crimson jacket fairly glittering with gilded buttons. On her head was a crimson velvet cap with a sweeping white plume, and beneath it was coiled her shining black hair. In her small round ears hung long heavy ear-rings, set with diamonds, and she held a gold-headed riding-whip in her hand.

With a quick, imperious tread, she crossed the room to where Allie lay—without noticing any thing or anybody—and exclaimed, in the same earnest, hearty voice :—

“Why, you precious angel! Who *are* you?”

“I am Allie Blythe,” said the child, timidly; she was startled and half afraid of this bright, impulsive stranger; “there is mamma.”



JUANITA McBRIDE.

“And I am Juanita!”* she said, turning to Mrs. Blythe, and touching her cap with the end of her whip, by way of salute. “Now, my dear Mrs. Blythe, don’t look so astonished, for I assure you I am *not* a heathen, and I come well recommended—where *is* my pocket? — Papa McBride wrote—”

“Oh, then you are Miss McBride,” said Mrs. Blythe, glad of some excuse to welcome this strange guest, that she half suspected she should like very much.

“Bah! yes, I suppose so; but I *do* hate to be called *Miss*. Oh, here’s Papa McBride’s letter—he’s the *dearest* old soul—just read what he says; he is so in love with your son that I suspect he wishes you had an older one.”

Mrs. Blythe offered her guest a rocking

* I need not tell my California readers that this is pronounced Wan-e-ta, but others may not be as accustomed to the Spanish, and so I take the liberty. C. C.

chair, but she preferred a low seat near Allie, and with an arm round "Rosebud"—she chatted with the two, while Mrs. Blythe looked over the letter.

It was from Mr. McBride to his wandering star," as he called his daughter, telling her of his new book-keeper in whom he was very much interested—that his family resided about ten miles from the ranch of the friends whom she was visiting—and advising her to gallop over some day and make their acquaintance—adding, "thank those parents, in my name, for training up one such citizen as John promises to be in this land that has such need of good men."

"And now, am I welcome?" said Juanita, gayly, as Mrs. Blythe finished reading.

"You are welcome for your own sake, warm-hearted Juanita, and doubly welcome for the kind words you bring me of

my boy," and Mrs. Blythe, with an impulsiveness very common to lovable women, leaned over and imprinted a kiss on the warm, red lips of the dark-eyed beauty.

It was impossible to be in the society of Juanita McBride one hour and remain a stranger to her. A true child of nature, she gave utterance to every emotion, and though in form she was regal as a young queen, at heart she was innocent as a child. She had been in this country since her early childhood, but her dark beauty first bloomed under the fervid skies of Spain; and her freedom of manner—which would have seemed very unlady-like in some places—was readily pardoned, for it was perfectly natural to her, and Juanita was *true* as the sun.

Oh, what a charming day that was at Inglenook! for Juanita soon put off her pretty hat, and was as much at home as

though she was raised there, and never had been over the hills in her life. She chatted with Mrs. Blythe about the country, the crops and mines; about the city, her father's business, and her mother—her “pretty white mother,” as she sometimes called her. She sung lively Spanish songs for Allie, and told her of beautiful leaves and mosses she would gather and bring to her. She gave “Rosebud” a delightful ride on her white pony, Bonita, and even Carlo came in for a share of her caresses; he was too old to frolic much now.

When it was time to get dinner, Mrs. Blythe went to the kitchen, telling her little daughters to entertain Juanita—the *Miss* had been dropped long ago—but there was so much talking to do—women *do* talk, you know, when they get together—that she soon sauntered in, and, in short

—when Uncle Joe entered the house a little in advance of his respected brother-in-law, a tropical queen was setting the dinner table.

CHAPTER X.

I AM sorry to record any thing that can, in any way, reflect upon any of the delightful people that sat around that dinner-table; but truth compels me to say, that for a person of his strength of intellect and sturdy habits—to say nothing of his thirty-six years—Uncle Joe appeared a little wandering in his mind. Naturally a perfect gentleman, and with such advantages of education and travel as would enable him to grace any circle, he sat silent and spell-bound in the presence of this dark-eyed girl, whose untamed spirit electrified them all. Mr. Blythe showed his delight, in his own cordial, gentlemanly manner, in the society of their charming

guest, but there sat dear honest Uncle Joe under the fire of her blazing eyes, putting white sugar on his corned beef and thinking he was eating ambrosia. He made up for his mistake, however, by covering his rice pudding with black pepper, wondering it should be so long cooling.

“Now, please ask me to come again; I feel some how as if I had been among the angels,” said Juanita as, soon after dinner, she was preparing to go home. “You won’t be shocked now, will you?” she continued, when they had all assured her how heartily welcome she would be; “you won’t be shocked, because I have so much life I don’t know what to do with it, and so flourish around some just to let off steam? I like you all so much, I want to come often; perhaps you can tame me down some—not much though, you know—for between you and I, if those two darlings

at home *do* read me such long lectures, they wouldn't like to see me change *very* much:" and going to the door she—*whistled*—a clear, musical strain, and up trotted her beautiful white pony, as obedient as a child.

"If we only had a horse, now, Miss McBride, one of us would escort you on your long ride home," said Mr. Blythe. "I almost fear to have you go alone."

"Oh, there's not the least danger this time of day," answered Juanita; "beside I am prepared for an adventure, see!" and she took from the folds of her dress a little silver-mounted pistol, then aiming it at a leaf of the big tree by the door, cut it from the stem.

"Diana herself!" exclaimed that matter-of-fact Uncle Joe.

"Oh, then you're *not* dumb!" cried Juanita, suddenly turning upon him as she

replaced her weapon ; “ come, then, help me in the saddle,” but before he could take one step toward performing that delightful service, she “ flashed ” into her seat and bowed him a roguish salute.

“ Come soon, and often, beautiful Juanita,” was the substance of all their farewells ; and they watched her till her white plumes disappeared over the hill.

Uncle Joe did more work that afternoon than he had done for a week ; it almost looked as though he tried to drive something from his mind ; but at night, when he was describing the beautiful queen that made everybody happy and lived in a palace built of diamonds, Allie exclaimed, “ why that’s like Juanita,” and Uncle Joe was so embarrassed that he let the pipe go out, and that ended the story.

The new friends were mutually pleased with each other, and many long bright days

did Juanita spend by the couch of Allie Blythe. It seemed to her the nearest to heaven's gate of any spot on earth, and the associations she met there seemed to call forth all the finer feelings of her really noble heart, and Mrs. Blythe found her a most charming friend. Many long bright days the white pony Bonita nibbled the grass on the hillsides, and no doubt thought the millennium had come—or whatever good time horses may look forward to—and many a bright moonlight evening a friendly couple galloped over the hills, and then *slowly* wended their way toward "Lone Tree Ranch;" for you must know that Uncle Joe had discovered that a horse was necessary for his health, and all agreed that it was not best for Juanita to ride alone.

One day she brought a mysterious box with her; a long, green pasteboard box,

that excited the curiosity of "Rosebud" very much indeed; the more so that Juanita's glittering eyes seemed to look at her so knowingly, but not a word was said about it. At length said Juanita, with a laugh that showed all her beautiful white teeth:—

"Well, well, 'Clover Blossom,' you are the best child on record. I'll not tease you any longer; bring me the box, *me alma*, and we'll see what the fairies have sent you."

The box was opened, and found to contain a beautiful wax doll, in evening toilet of white muslin and cherry ribbons, and her *real* hair dressed in flowing ringlets. The gift was so unexpected and so *very* welcome, that the delighted child, at a loss for words to express her thanks, threw her arms about Juanita's neck, covered her face with kisses, and then wound up with:—

“Oh, you sweet, *sweet* Juanita! I *do* love you so much; I wish you was my—” she couldn’t say mother or sister, so she finished with—“*auntie*. Oh, that’s it! I wish you was my precious auntie.”

Dell thought she must be choking Juanita, she grew so red in the face, so with one more kiss she released her, and went to share Allie’s admiration of her present. Taking a roll of silk and a gold thimble from her pocket, Juanita proceeded to make a cloak for the doll, and commenced a chat with Mrs. Blythe.

“I had a letter from home yesterday, Mrs Blythe, the dearest, longest letter—full of scolding, and running over with praise—I wish you knew my little white mother, you would like her so much—and I must read you what she says—but there! I’ve left it at home; well, you know that pincushion you showed me how to embroider? I made

it up and sent it home to mother, knowing she would cherish it as the only useful thing I ever did, but the darling thinks it is perfectly wonderful, and that I am the best child in existence. I want her to see this precious angel," she said, kissing Allie, "but I dread the comparison."

"I know you are a good daughter, Juanita; you couldn't be otherwise," answered Mrs. Blythe, affectionately, and then added, smiling, "I have noticed an expression of yours several times that I did not understand. Will you tell me why you call her your little white mother?"

"Why, she is as fair as you are," answered Juanita, as though she were a mother speaking of a favorite child. "She is so lovely and white, with soft little hands, and I can almost carry her in my arms. My tawny skin shines out beside her, I can tell you."

"Is your father Spanish, then?" asked Mrs. Blythe, timidly, but with interest.

"Bless his dear old heart, not a bit of it," exclaimed Juanita, proudly. "The blood in his veins is as crimson as the stripes in the flag he worships. Now I see you are wondering where I came from; well, that is a question yet to be answered; I am a waif."

"A *waif*, child!"

"Yes, let me tell you. Papa McBride was married ages ago—his dear old head is gray now—and for ten years he and mamma worshiped each other, *alone*; for no children came to bless them, which was a pity, for they had love enough for a dozen. They were wealthy, and fond of traveling, so at length fate led them over Spain. I've read somewhere that

"'What men call Fate is oft the hand of God,'
and I think it was so in this case. One

day they were driving in the suburbs of Toledo, when my mother heard a child crying. They slackened their pace and looked on every side—there were no houses near—and at length they saw a forlorn-looking little child sitting on the ground a few steps from the road. My mother's tender heart would not permit her to pass by, so alighting from the carriage she went and spoke to the poor little thing, who looked up in her face and moaned 'Juanita! Juanita!' She knew the baby must be lost, for it was not two years old, and its dainty clothing showed that it was the darling of some mother's heart; but no information could be got from the child, who had only learned that one word, nor yet by the most diligent inquiry through the neighborhood; and no one knew any thing of the little castaway. So, taking it in her arms, she re-entered her carriage and returned to the

city; the little head nestled on her childless bosom, the long lashes lying on the dark cheek, in the sweet sleep of innocence."

I want to interrupt Juanita's story here, to say a word myself. The sleep of childhood! what mother will not say with me, it is a holy thing. No matter what the day has been; how much mischief the little hands have done; how the restless feet have strayed from the path of right; how much the rebellious spirits have caused our hearts to ache; when we see the little ones in their beds—sleeping—in their pure white robes, with the flush of slumber tinting their rounded limbs, how our hearts go forth in tenderness; how we forgive, freely, gladly, earnestly forgive every fault, and think, in our fondness, they never can err again. Ah! mothers, in dreams our children walk with angels; waking, they walk with us.

"I'm getting very romantic, ain't I?" continued Juanita, "but it is my only romance, and I want to make the most of it—for, of course, I was the little waif. Every possible effort was made by rewards and advertisements to discover some trace of my parents, but of no avail, and from that day to this the loving kindness of my foster parents has left me nothing to desire."

You may be sure this interesting history did not detract a particle from the interest every one felt in Juanita, and after tea Allie coaxed her to tell it over again for the benefit of the gentlemen; she did so, adding many embellishments, much to the delight of Della, who thought it fully equal to Uncle Joe's stories.

But the best of all Uncle Joe's stories Miss Della never heard. It was told that night in the moonlight, near the doorway

at "Lone Tree Ranch," and Juanita thought no story was ever so sweet. I may not tell you what it was; the old have heard it, the young will hear it, and it is ever the sweetest story of our lives.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHNNIE had now a good situation, and was receiving a liberal salary, but he made no change in his mode of life. Not that he was penurious the least in the world, but remembering who gave him the first start, that to his idolized sister he owed the means to begin his life-work, and the hope and faith to continue it, he had no desire to indulge in any useless extravagance. He was every way comfortable where he was, and he would not grieve kind, motherly Mrs. Sumner, much more the dear old Señor, by removing. He still devoted as much time as possible to his old friend, when not attending to his business, or

writing to the dear ones at "bonnie Inglenook."

Johnnie did not fail to encounter his share of the wolves that beset the path of life, but as Allie had told him when he left home, when temptation came the angels came also.

There were three clerks in Mr. McBride's store, beside Johnnie, who was the book-keeper. They were all older than himself, and from envying his position and the confidence of the firm, they soon came to dislike him for his steady habits and refined manners. I ought to make some exception in favor of Slocum, who in his heart admired John Blythe, but had not the courage to stand up for him against the jeers and scoffs of the other two. And so he joined in, rather weakly, it is true, but it never would do to differ from two high-toned young men, one of whom belonged

to a fire company and the other boasted of having fought a duel.

One day they had been discussing the subject, as they often did, and wishing that something would happen to "take him down a peg," and "teach the young Puritan a lesson," when Knowls, the duellist, proposed they give a supper and get him drunk, adding, "we'll see then how his lordship will stand with the boss."

"That's the checker," answered Daly, who sported a red shirt on all occasions, "he won't refuse a supper, you know; that never was known to happen."

So Slocum was deputed, as being the most intimate with him, to give the invitation, which he did that afternoon as Johnnie sat at his desk. Our young friend would rather have said "no." He had no objection to a social supper, by any means, but these young men were not such as he

would choose for his companions. Still, as they were thrown together in business relations he had no wish to offend them, and so make it unpleasant for all parties. So as he walked down the store with Slocum toward where the others stood, he made up his mind to accept, upon conditions.

"I thank you for your invitation, gentlemen," said Johnnie, as he approached them, in a courteous but rather reserved manner, "and will accept it, upon condition that you let me pay my share of the expenses."

"Come, now, that's hardly the thing," said Daly; "it's our treat, and of course we mean to pay."

"Then you will be kind enough to excuse me; my circumstances will not permit me to *give* suppers, and my honor forbids I should incur an obligation I can not repay."

"Let him have his way," said Slocum.

"Blythe's way is generally pretty near right."

"Since we can have him on no other terms, we must submit," said Knowls, with a friendliness he did not feel.

"Then I will join you here at nine o'clock;" and raising his hat slightly, Johnnie passed out of the store.

"We've got a sure thing on him now," said Knowls, thrusting his hands in his pockets and leaning against the counter; "we'll take him down to 'Ned's Own' for supper, and after he has got down three or four glasses, he'll not object to a friendly game; do you see?"

"Well, now," said Slocum, hesitatingly, "it'll all be square, you know? You won't go to coming any games on him?"

"Oh, no," laughed Daly, "we'll only try his moral courage a little, to see if it is the right kind, you know."

"I say, Slocum, if we get to playing kind o' sociable, and Daly and I want to slip out for an hour, you can keep him there, can't you?"

"I guess likely."

"Well, you do it, and you will be the gainer. We've got a little job to attend to somewhere near here."

"You don't mean—" began Slocum, looking up almost affrighted.

"Yes, I *do* mean; and if you turn white-livered now, I'll put you in jail for all the money you owe me, and then call you out and shoot you." And with this ferocious threat, he and Daly left the store and swaggered down the street.

There had been no customers in the store during the whole of this conversation, and these charming young men thought they had the place to themselves; but when, after the two had left, Slocum

stood arranging some goods on the wall shelves at a further counter, Mr. McBride stepped from behind a pile of goods, near where the three had stood, and walking quietly, gained the counting-room without being seen or heard.

“So, Blythe has come to trial, has he?” he said to himself, when he had shut the door softly. “He is a royal good fellow; I’ve half a mind to warn him. No, I won’t either; it won’t hurt him a bit to be tempted; I’ll risk him, I’ll risk him;” and he smiled to himself and rubbed his hands together, as though it did him good to trust in a man’s integrity. “I’d like to be behind the scenes and see those young villains maneuver. But stop a minute—it seems to me—” and Mr. McBride stood still and thought over all the conversation he had heard. “I don’t exactly understand what those two meant by having a

job somewhere near here. It may not be—but it can't do any harm—and I think I shall lodge in the store to-night. It may be, my good angel led me behind that pile of goods just in time to discover some greater villainy." And Mr. McBride put on his hat, and walked out of the counting-room in his usual manner. Stopping a moment to speak to Knowls, who had returned, about some matter of business, he remarked that he might not be in again that evening, and they must be sure and shut up all right, and left the store.

Johnnie came back to the store at nine o'clock, but there was such a rush of customers that it was eleven before they could shut up. He spent the two hours alone in the counting-room, writing letters; when they began to put out the lights in the store, he gathered up the books and put them in the safe. With his habitual pru-

dence, he remembered that he was going out to supper with company he was not sure of, and the safe-key might not be secure in his possession. So he hung it on a nail in a little recess where Mr. McBride had left it sometimes, put out the light, and joined the others.

John Blythe walked on to his fate, with an unconscious heart, as many a one has done before. He did not see the dark, malignant face that peered through the glass door of the counting-room as he locked the safe; he did not know how one base heart bounded as he hung the key on the nail instead of putting it in his pocket; he did not know that he was to be tried, as by fire, but so it was.

About one o'clock the party had finished their supper, and had lit their cigars; all except Johnnie, who hadn't learned to smoke yet. His companions were wise

enough to know that, if they wished to make him one of them, they must not disgust him at first, so they had been very watchful of their conduct, and the four had passed a very sociable evening. The wine was good, and, though Johnnie drank very sparingly, it had the usual effect of drowning his prudence, or at least putting it to sleep.

Some one proposed euchre; and when Johnnie pleaded ignorance of the game, they told him that was no matter, he'd soon learn, and the cards were produced. While Slocum was explaining the game to Johnnie, Knowls and Daly, making some excuse, went out. At the end of about an hour—Johnnie had become so interested in the cards that it did not seem ten minutes to him—they returned, and the play began.

Johnnie thought they seemed rather

flurried, and when they complimented him on his progress it was a little overdone; but it was merely a passing thought, and was soon forgotten. At four o'clock in the morning they separated, the rest urging Johnnie to join them again in a day or two, adding, they'd make quite a man of him after awhile.

Avoiding a direct promise as well as he could, Johnnie bade them good-night, or rather "good-morning," and started for home. He did not feel altogether satisfied with himself; he was decidedly uncomfortable; but he tried to attribute it to physical causes. The air was thick with fog, such fog as only San Francisco and London can produce; and his head ached, from the loss of sleep and the unaccustomed stimulants he had taken; so he thought to himself that was reason enough for his unquiet feelings. To be sure, it was very late, but

he had spent a very pleasant evening, and no great harm done, as he could see—there was no betting or gambling—he didn't know as he should go again—but still he didn't see any great harm.

So ran his thoughts all the way home; he entered the house silently, ascended the stairs to his room, and opened the door. A faint odor greeted his senses that made him pause an instant, as though an angel stood on the threshold. Where did it come from?—this sweet perfume, that seemed to him a breath from some haven of purity that he might not enter.

He struck a light, and on his table lay, beside a letter, a cluster of Allie's roses. His angel sister had spoken to him, and a voice from the skies would not have been more effectual. Her face looked out from every blossom, her spirit floated on their breath; the flowers were drooping—though

John Brewster had cherished them as the apple of his eye—but to Johnnie's sensitive soul they seemed to be drooping because of his unworthiness, and, gathering them to his heart with a pang of deep contrition, he bowed his head upon the table and wept.

Dear, helpless, suffering Allie Blythe! Happy! thrice happy Allie Blythe! It is worth a lifetime of suffering to have saved this precious one.

Johnnie raised his head at length, and looked at Allie's flowers with a different expression; he had looked into his soul, and loathed the thoughts he had had that night, and now he was himself again. He had passed through temptation, but Allie had saved him. Opening his letter, he found an invitation to come home, and bring Señor Torras with him, to attend Uncle Joe's wedding on the tenth of August.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning Johnnie went to the store as usual, and, though his head was not as clear as he would like to have had it, yet his mind was; for he had firmly decided that never again would he step aside from the path he had chosen, even as much as he had done the night before.

There was quite a crowd about the store when he arrived, and, judge of his astonishment when he learned that it had been entered in the night, and two bags of gold taken from the safe, valued at \$10,000.

Of course, there were a hundred different stories afloat, as to the "how" and "who," but the only thing definite was, that the robbery must have been committed by

some one connected with the store, as the store and safe keys had been used, and every thing was found in its proper place.

Knowls was seen in close confab with a police officer, talking in the most friendly and confidential manner. The officer nodded three or four times, as though he understood the case perfectly, then walked up to John Blythe and arrested him on suspicion of the robbery.

Johnnie's self-possession entirely forsook him at this unexpected charge; he turned as white as death, even to the very lips, and tried to speak, but no sound came. His innocence sustained him, however; and when Mr. McBride stepped up to him and said, "I'll stand by you, Blythe," his courage returned, and, bowing a little haughtily to the officer, he said, "I am ready, sir."

Mr. McBride and his four assistants

went to the police court, where an investigation was held. I am not much of a police reporter, dear reader, but I'll try and give you the sum and substance of the affair in as few words as possible.

Mr. McBride was first called upon, who testified that "he left the store about six o'clock, at the same time remarking to Knowls that he probably should not return again. The gold was in the safe then. Knowls, Daly, and Slocum were in the store."

Knowls was then called. "Certainly, he could give a very straight account of himself, from six o'clock. He was waiting on a customer when Mr. McBride passed out; he stopped and gave him some directions about some goods that were to be delivered the next day—that is, to-day. Blythe was not in the store; he had gone out about half-past five; he came back at

nine, and went into the counting-room: the three clerks were very busy serving customers till eleven o'clock, then they closed the store; Blythe had been in the counting-room alone two hours. After the store was closed, they all four went to 'Ned's Own' to supper; had a few quiet games of euchre, and went straight home, at least *he* did, about four o'clock. Didn't observe that Blythe had a great deal of money about him, but he was anxious to bet, and offered to give his notes for large sums, saying they were as good as gold."

Knowls told his story with a confident air, as though he had done the country some service, for which the country should reward him handsomely.

Daly came next, and repeated, in substance, the same story; and the judge noticed that he tried to bring forward the same point—namely, Blythe's being alone

in the counting-room, and his unusual freedom with money. He had evidently learned his lesson pretty well.

Next came Slocum; and when he commenced the same familiar story, the judge interrupted him, and began to ask questions. This disconcerted him a little, and the steady searching gaze of Johnnie's eyes disconcerted him a great deal; so, between the two, he made out rather a crooked story. He was very sure about Johnnie's being in the counting-room alone, but when questioned about his using money, rather faltered; and finally, as though he had made up his mind to tell the truth, said "he heard nothing about money, except that Blythe wouldn't consent to go to supper unless he was allowed to pay his share of the expense."

Johnnie was then called on to tell his story. He was wounded to the soul that

he should be suspected of such a deed, but he knew the officers were only doing what they considered their duty, and all he had to do was to show them their mistake. So, with his proud head lifted up, and his honest face clear and unclouded, Johnnie gave in his testimony.

“I was in the store all the afternoon till half-past five; about that time Mr. Slocum came and invited me to join Knowls, Daly, and himself at a supper that night. After some little conversation with them, I accepted the invitation, and went out, leaving the three in the store. I went to my boarding-house, Mrs. Sumner’s on Stockton Street, and wrote a letter home, then spent an hour or so in the room of my former tutor, Señor Torras. At nine o’clock I returned to the store; it was full of customers; I went to the counting-room and wrote some half a dozen letters. When I saw them closing

the store, I put the books away in the safe, and locked it. The gold was in the safe then, for I remember moving one of the bags to make room for the ledger. I hung the key on a nail in a little corner; went with the three gentlemen to supper at a restaurant called 'Ned's Own.' We played several games of euchre after supper, and separated about four in the morning. I went directly home and to bed; did not hear of the robbery till I reached the store this morning. I think I have mentioned every circumstance as it occurred, gentlemen, but will gladly answer any questions you may ask."

The judge then proceeded to question him.

"Who came into the counting-room while you were there, between nine and eleven?"

"No one."

"You are quite positive that you were alone all the time?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Do you always hang the safe key on a nail?"

"No, sir; it is my custom to carry it in my pocket."

"Why did you vary your custom on this occasion?"

"I thought the key might be safer there than in my possession, as I was going, with persons of whom I knew but little, to a place I didn't know at all."

"Had you any reason to think those persons dishonest?"

"I was not sufficiently acquainted to form any opinion either way. It was not that I had suspicion, but merely an act of caution."

"I think you mentioned cards; are you in the habit of playing?"

"I played my first game last night."

"Did you win or lose most?"

"Neither, sir; there were no stakes of any kind."

"Did you find it difficult to learn the game?"

"No, sir, not very. Mr. Slocum taught it to me, and I thought I was rather stupid learning it; but when Knowls and Daly returned, they praised me highly for my progress."

"When they returned from where?" Every one looked interested now; they seemed to have "struck a new lead."

"I really don't know where they went."

"Will you be kind enough to tell us all you do know; about what time they went, and how long they were gone?"

"I took no particular notes, of course, but will remember as near as I can. We went to the restaurant at eleven, and sup-

per was brought immediately on the table ; it was twelve when we got through, and I think it must have been half-past when they excused themselves and went out, leaving Mr. Slocum to teach me the game. I did not remark it then, but when I recall the circumstance now, I am certain they must have been absent an hour."

The judge recalled Slocum, and asked him how long Knowls and Daly were absent, when they left the restaurant the night before.

"Full an hour," was the reply.

Knowls and Daly were then called in together. Fixing his eyes sternly upon them, he asked :—

"Where were you, and what were you doing, between half-past twelve and half-past one last night?"

So unexpected was the question, that they both turned pale, and were not able to

say a word. At a sign from the judge, a police officer stepped to the side of each; the two confederates looked at each other in dismay.

“I will answer for them, if you please,” said Mr. McBride, stepping forward. “In my former deposition I said that I left my store about six o’clock, at the same time mentioning that I might not return again. That was all true; but I wish now to be a little more explicit. My store, as you all know, stands on a corner, and has an entrance on both streets. About half-past five I came in at the side door; if you will notice the premises, you will see that a long counter stands on that side, and on the end nearest the door is an immense pile of ready-made clothing. Seeing something that appeared a little out of order, I stepped forward to arrange it, which brought me directly behind this pile of goods. I soon discovered that my presence

was unknown, and that a very interesting conversation was going on, on the other side of the counter."

Here Mr. McBride gave an account of the conversation, from the time Johnnie and Slocum joined the others till Knowls and Daly left the store, as has been described elsewhere. From that point he continued:—

"I was so surprised by what I heard, that I did not know what to do till I had thought it over; so, when Slocum's back was turned, I reached the counting-room unobserved. I left the store at six, as I have said; but at half-past eleven I returned, and staid there the rest of the night."

As he pronounced these words in a slow, distinct voice, he fixed his eyes upon the two culprits, who turned deathly pale; for, like all boasters, they were as cowardly as they were wicked. Mr. McBride then continued:—

“I entered the store with my private keys, and after a little deliberation—during which time I recalled all the experiences of detectives and private watchmen I ever read—I settled myself among some piles of clothing behind the counter nearest the counting-room door. I should judge full an hour had passed—it was too dark to see my watch—when the side door was unlocked, as slowly and softly as possible, and two men entered. They made their way through the store easy enough, taking care to make no noise, and entered the counting-room. Rising to my feet, I watched them through the glass door. They opened a dark lantern, and by its light I saw the faces of Jonathan Knowls and Nathan Daly as plain as I see them now.”

A murmur of indignation was heard all over the court-room; not at the accuser, but at the villains who had tried to throw

the guilt of their deed upon an innocent boy. Not the least surprised was Johnnie himself; he had never once dreamed *they* were guilty, and could hardly comprehend that they had tried to accuse him. There was some confusion just then, the prisoners foolishly thinking they could escape; they were soon handcuffed, though, and the judge asked Mr. McBride if he had any thing more to say.

“Only a few words more. I saw them unlock the safe and take the gold, talking all the while about how cleverly they had drawn the net around Blythe, and how easily the blame would fall on him. It would take a much more skillful plot than they could devise, to make me suspect John Blythe of a dishonest thought. They carried my gold away before my eyes; for I, being only one man, and an old one at that, dared not attack them, lest

worse should happen ; and now I leave the matter in your hands."

So you see, my dear readers, it came out right, after all. Knowls and Daly told where the money was, thinking their punishment would be lighter. How that was I don't know, but they were walked off to prison for awhile, and out of our story for ever. Slocum was let off with a great fright, for it was evident that he had been forced into his share of the plot. Mr. McBride told him he would retain him in the store, but should keep a sharp eye on him, and Slocum was very grateful, for he was heartily disgusted with his past associates.

John Blythe was congratulated by every one, and replied to every one with his own modest dignity. Mr. McBride was as proud and important as though Johnnie was his own son, and was not at all backward in informing people how much he valued him.

Even the judge shook hands with Johnnie, and—I believe I said everybody spoke with him, but I was mistaken; old Señor Torras pressed through the crowd and took Johnnie's hands in his, without speaking a word, but his face was enough; and following in his wake was great big John Brewster, who never spoke either, but turned his back toward Johnnie and blew his nose—tre-men-dous-ly.

At last Mr. McBride came to him and said:—"Shake hands once more, John Blythe, and then go home and pack up: I'll give you till to-morrow to start for Inglenook. There! you needn't look so surprised; don't I know what's going on? We must all be there on the tenth, you know, and a week's holiday won't hurt you. I'll be there on the tenth, you may be sure, to see the man who has caught my mocking bird."

Johnnie thanked him as well as he could, and then went home with the Señor and Brewster. He had the greatest time in the world telling the news to little Mrs. Sumner. She would open her eyes to a most alarming extent, and raise her hands in astonishment, when he spoke of the adventure of the morning; and when he told of going home to attend the wedding, her plump face was one broad expansive smile; she could find no expression for her congratulations, except in a good sized loaf of the richest wedding cake, which she made that very afternoon, nearly driving the Chinaman crazy in her excessive zeal; that is, if Chinamen are capable of going crazy, and I believe they are. Her remarks in the mean time, were *not* as definite or concise as some of our most finished orators would have made them, but then, consider,

the plump little widow was not a finished orator.

“Just to *think* of it! Here was I as might be tempted to do a'most any thing bad—who knows?—a cooking chickens for dinner in peace and quietness, and in this very town them wampires in human form, a chargin' that boy with highway burglary, which is as innocent as a baby, that never thought of bein' born, and besides haint got no father and mother. Oh, don't I wish—there's that pesky Chinaman gone to sleep, and if he *does* let my fire go out—ten eggs, two pounds of white sugar, that's all right—if there's any thing I *do* like to make, it is wedding cake, and, Oh, them wampires! wouldn't I put a plumb in *their* cake, and I want this to be extra nice, for—Oh, that Chinaman! Yop-pee!”

The next morning, two trunks and various boxes were put into John Brewster's

wagon, and Johnnie, with great reverence, helped the happy old Señor in, and then sprang in himself, laughingly assuring Mrs. Sumner in the doorway, that they would take good care of themselves, deliver all her messages, and not eat the cake up on the way. John Brewster cracked his whip—his trusty span stepped proudly off—the Señor seemed to have drank a new draught of life on that mellow golden morning—and the heart of our dear Johnnie bounded joyously in his bosom—for they were “homeward bound.”

CHAPTER XIII.

HOME at Inglenook once more. Please don't get out of patience, reader mine, because I take you over this road so often. The wings of imagination are easy to travel on, and I promise you this is the last trip I will ask you to take, even in that most delightful manner.

Our travelers arrived in safety, and every hour seemed brimful of happiness. Johnnie had brought presents for them all, but nothing was half so welcome as his bright, handsome face, and there were a thousand questions to ask and answer, even though his letters, hid under Allie's pillows, were almost worn out with reading. The first opportunity Johnnie had—while dear little

"Rosie" was entertaining the Señor in the shade of the big tree—he took the old beloved place by his mother's knee, laid his head in her lap, and, holding Allie's snow-white hands in his, told them the story of his late temptation. Every thought and feeling was laid open to their gaze, and how freely, gladly was he forgiven. When he told of finding the flowers, and what their influence was, his voice grew tremulous with emotion, and, gathering Allie in his arms, he said tenderly:—

"To you, my precious angel, I owe every thing."

The smile that lit her pure white face seemed to rise into a halo about her head as she said, with sweet solemnity:—

"Not me, dearest, but Him that sent me."

The Señor sat in the midst of this beautiful family circle, a loved and honored

guest. The very air of Inglenook seemed to renew his youth, and in his weary heart he cherished the seemingly impossible wish, that his long life-pilgrimage might end in such a blissful place as this. It was beautiful to see his thin form regain its stateliness, and the wan look vanish from his face; beautiful to see that the genial smile lingered longer and longer in his eyes, as his heart grew more accustomed to this new happiness; and more beautiful than all, to hear his wonderful voice float out in the evening, till the whole valley seemed flooded with music and moonlight.

His singing had a singular effect upon Allie. She would lay with her eyes closed, with every quivering nerve strained to its highest tension, almost fainting with ecstasy. No one knew how intense her emotion was, till once she drew his head down to her pillow and whispered in his ear:—

“Promise you’ll sing to me *when I go*. Let music charm me last on earth, and greet me first in heaven.”

There’s one thing I mustn’t neglect to tell you, which is, that, in view of his approaching marriage, Uncle Joe had built a large addition to the house, containing three rooms, so that now it was quite a spacious edifice. Mr. McBride had sent some very handsome furniture, which Mrs. Blythe and “Rosie”—that seemed to be the baby’s settled name now—had arranged with loving hands, and the pretty nest was all ready for the bright bird that *to-morrow* would fold her wings within it.

Yes, this was the day before the wedding; and though it was really very “private and select,” yet it was a great event in this peaceful valley, where events were so rare. There were dozens of “last things” to be done to-day, you know, and the little

mother was tiring herself most delightfully. "Blytheheart" and Uncle Joe were kept busy, you may be sure, between the mother's orders and "Rosie's" pranks—for that little dumpling seemed boiling over with mischief this day; but they could no more chide her than they could chide a grasshopper for jumping, or a cricket for singing.

Johnnie had gone to the village, armed with a list of things that "*must* be had," and the Señor had gone with him, stepping off over the hill almost as briskly as Johnnie himself.

Juanita had not been at Inglenook since the arrival of our friends, for she was busy at home with her own preparations—by "home" I mean, of course, Lone Tree Ranch, where she was spending the summer; so neither Johnnie nor the Señor had seen her. But she would come to-morrow, her

father and mother with her, and, as "Rosie" said, "be their own Juanita forever."

Juanita insisted upon being married at Inglenook, "to have the blessing of that angel's presence," as she told her mother; and when was ever a wish denied Juanita?

"Rosie" ran to the door for the twentieth time to see if Johnnie was coming—though he could not possibly come for some hours yet—and then ran back with the cry that a horse was running away down the hill-side. This brought every one to the door, and sure enough they saw a man in a buggy, with a lady beside him, trying to manage a very unmanageable horse.

Mr. Blythe and Uncle Joe started to his assistance, and got there just in time to help straighten up the carriage he had overturned, and pick up the lady, who had been thrown out, and lay on the ground insensible.

They carried her quickly into the house, and tried every means to restore her. They were only partially successful, and though they ascertained there was no positive injury, yet the shock had been so great as to produce a kind of stupor, and it was thought best not to try to remove her, but give her rest till nature should right herself in her own way. So she was laid on the bed in Mrs. Blythe's best room, and left in quietness.

The man who was with her said: "He did not know exactly who she was, though it was evident she was a perfect lady. He was on his way to place her in the asylum at Stockton, as she was quite insane; perfectly harmless and gentle, but quite out of her mind, and had wandered about the country for a year or two. She either was, or had been, wealthy, as she always dressed handsomely, if not richly, and it was thought

best to place her in the asylum till it could be ascertained who, and where, her friends were. He was greatly indebted to them for their kindness to his helpless charge; would accept their kind offer, and let her remain a day or two, till she should be better able to resume her journey. In the mean time he would stop at the camp just beyond, and wait for her recovery;" and once more thanking them, he drove away.

Mrs. Blythe watched over the helpless stranger with a sister's tenderness; smoothed out the shining masses of her long black hair, and looked pityingly on the thin, dark face, that was now almost frightfully pale and wan. Rest was what she wanted; rest for the poor worn body; rest for the spirit; and, with a sigh of pity, the gentle nurse closed the door and left her to sleep.

That evening Allie begged the Señor for just one song before she went to sleep.

"I will try and recall one I have not sung for a great many years," answered the Señor, with some emotion. "It is singularly appropriate to-night, as it is addressed to—a name that is very sacred to me—or once was—Juanita," and clearer, sweeter than ever rang out his voice as he sang:—

Nita! Juanita!

The bright stars are gleaming,

But to me all is dark when I see not thine eyes;

Nita! Juanita!

Awake from thy dreaming,

The low winds are sighing—thou bright one, arise!

Nita! Juanita!

I'm waiting and calling,

Till death I will wait for a signal from thee.

Nita! Juanita!

The night dews are falling,

Awaken my loved one, and come forth to me.

While yet the last clear note was vibrating on the air, Mrs. Blythe heard a

strange noise in the other room, and going in quickly she found her stranger-guest sitting up in the bed, and trembling as though laboring under some extreme but suppressed excitement. Her large dark eyes were now unclosed, and wandered about the room with a half-beseeching, half-terrified expression, but she did not speak. Mrs. Blythe soothed her gently, and she soon sank again into a quiet slumber.

The tenth of August dawned as bright and glorious, as though the day had been ordered expressly from Paradise; and Inglenook put on its gayest smiles; between you and I, who love it so well, it was more like a little slice cut out of Eden than any thing else. There were flowers everywhere; Juanita's rooms were fairly redolent with their sweet perfume, and the table—set out in the neatest of all kitch-

ens, with every thing ready upon it, to save confusion—was fit for Flora herself to preside at. Mrs. Sumner's cake occupied the post of honor, and was trimmed with Allie's roses for the bride.

"Rosie" was radiant in one of Allie's pretty white dresses which she, poor darling, would never want again, trimmed on the skirt, bosom, and shoulders with roses and green leaves, by Allie's tasty fingers. For herself, she would not put off her little white wrapper, but she said to her mother:—

"If you please, mamma, you may curl my hair, I'd like to brighten-up as much as I can, to show these dear people how much I love them. I don't want to be the ghost at the wedding." So the braids were taken down, and the long silky hair was turned into curls around her head, and every one gave her a kiss as they

passed, and thought she looked more like an angel than ever.

By and by, a large two-horse wagon was seen coming over the hill, and in it the whole party from Lone Tree Ranch. Mr. and Mrs. Atkins, Juanita's friends—whom I haven't introduced before, as they are not essential to the story—Mr. and Mrs. McBride, and last, but decidedly not least, that young bright Amazonian queen, dear, precious Juanita herself.

Of course there was a great time introducing everybody all around, but people do get along so splendidly when everybody is good, and likes everybody else. All eyes instantly followed Juanita: beloved as she was by all, they had thought her endowed with every possible charm; but to-day there hung about her an air of shy timidity, as though she

was too happy for laughter, and every heart shared in her tender joy.

The ceremony was to be performed early in the afternoon, so that Mr. and Mrs. Atkins could reach home before night; the rest of the party would remain at Inglenook. So about one o'clock the minister arrived, on horseback, and a few minutes later Uncle Joe entered Allie's room, with Juanita leaning on his arm. A few words were said, another ring glittered on her finger, and Juanita was a queen in good earnest; holding supreme dominion over one true, faithful heart.

I beg pardon of my young lady readers for not telling about the wedding dress before; I will try to make amends. Mrs. McBride had set her heart on having her daughter married in a dress exactly like the one she wore at her own wedding: white satin, with lace over-dress; but Juan-

ita soon coaxed her out of that. She knew that the same dress would not be as becoming to her as to her little white mother, so she insisted upon a bright rose-colored silk, and let her mother be as extravagant as she liked in the white lace that trimmed it. Allie had fastened sprigs of the trailing white jasmin in her hair, and Mrs. Blythe placed a knot of geranium leaves and white waxballs on her bosom.

Do you like our bride, young ladies? I assure you she was as bright a picture as one would wish to look at.

Well, they sat down to dinner, and were the merriest, happiest party you ever saw. You all know how it is at such times—everybody says something that makes everybody else laugh, and half the time they don't know what they are laughing at. The old Señor even broke a wish-bone with Rosie, and laughed when he got the long-

est piece. Rosie begged him to tell his wish, and he whispered in her ear:—

“I was wishing that pretty bride would kiss an old man like me.” Then Rosie clapped her hands with laughter, and said:—

“I’ll tell Uncle Joe, Señor, you see if I don’t.”

Just then, Mr. Blythe arose to propose a toast to the bride, which Uncle Joe had to reply to—and right handsomely he did it, too; then every one gave a toast, from the old Señor down to Rosie, who held up her little glass, and repeated what Johnnie whispered to her:—

Dear friends, you all know
That our dear Uncle Joe
Has taken a beautiful wife,
To share all his trouble,
His joys to make double,
And brighten his journey through life.

Here's a toast to the bride:
And whatever betide,
May her life be of Eden the type;
May the heaviest cloud
That her vision shall shroud,
Arise from Uncle Joe's pipe.

This was received with "tumultuous applause," as the newspapers say, and they soon left the table, for it was discovered that the hours were slipping away unheeded, and it was time for Mr. and Mrs. Atkins to take their leave.

You mustn't think the strange lady in the other room had been forgotten; Mrs. Blythe had gone in several times and offered her the daintiest food from the table, but she still lay silent and half-unconscious, and no effort was made to disturb her.

As evening fell, the family settled down into something like quiet, and, quite natu-

rally, they all gathered in Allie's room. Rosa hesitated a little about taking her seat on Uncle Joe's knee; she thought his being married had made some great change, though she had no idea what, and she hung shyly behind her mother's chair till Juanita said:—

“I'll go away again, Rosie, if I come between you and Uncle Joe. You mustn't think you have lost an uncle; you have only gained an auntie.”

So Rosa sprang into her old place, and nestled down as contented as a kitten. It was another one of those glorious moonlight evenings that I have spoken of so often; and I would never weary of trying, at least, to describe them, for it would be only trying; no words could ever paint the moonlight in the mountains of California. The lamps were not lit for some time, but then the air grew chilly, the doors were

closed, and the circle drew closer around the home altar.

“Oh, Uncle Joe,” cried Rosie, suddenly, “let Juanita fill your pipe to-night, and tell us a story. That’ll be so splendid, *won’t it?*”

The motion was carried unanimously, and Juanita commenced her wifely duties, something as Minnehaha did, by lighting her husband’s pipe. Uncle Joe smoked in perfect silence for a minute or two, and then began:—

“In the southern part of Spain, a rich old Don had built him a castle. Though this was a ‘castle in Spain,’ it was much more substantial than the majority of such castles usually are, for we build them of dreams on a foundation of air. But Don Pedro’s castle was solid, and broad, and high. It was surrounded by large gardens, where bloomed the rarest tropical flowers, and

fountains played in the sunshine like diamond cascades. Every thing that wealth could buy was lavished on this beautiful place—for Don Pedro was richer than he or any one else knew—and he lived there in the greatest magnificence, with his retinue of servants and his only daughter.

“The Don himself was dark and surly in his manner, at best, and, to those under him, cruel and tyrannical. He was subject to frequent and terrible outbursts of temper, that rendered him a terror, even to his friends. There were many dark hints—and sometimes even more than hints—about wild adventures on the sea in his earlier life; but every one was ready to take his gold, no matter how he came by it.

“His daughter was the most beautiful maiden that ever waved a fan. She had every charm that nature could bestow on

one girl, and all the gallants in the country were pining for love of her.

Her father had promised her in marriage, years before, to the son of another horrid old Don ; and the young man had grown up in the belief that he was to have her, and, better still, her father's gold, whether she willed or not, and had never thought it worth while to put himself out to be agreeable.

“But the young lady had a mind of her own, and had no idea of exchanging a tyrannical father for a tyrannical husband. So she fell in love with a young merchant, who had no fortune but his honesty and worth, and who loved the very ground she walked on.

“Don Pedro almost choked with rage when he found it out, and said all the awful things he could think of. He shut his daughter up, and wouldn't even let her

go to mass; and swore that, in two weeks, she should marry the man he had chosen for her. But she had a faithful servant, who had grown up with her from childhood, who took rather a different view of things from her master, and set her woman-wit to work to insure the happiness of her beloved mistress.

“The night appointed for the wedding arrived, and the castle was one blaze of light from roof to foundation. Throngs of gayly dressed people came pouring in, and the air was filled with all kinds of delightful music. The old Don was in his most gracious humor, and answered the congratulations of his guests almost pleasantly. All were waiting for the entrance of the bridal party, when a servant approached the Don and spoke to him in a low voice, and the story ran from one to another like fire.

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“The bride was nowhere to be found.

“The old Don raved and stormed at such a rate, that his friends gave up trying to sympathize with him, and hurried away to spread the news all over the country, and say they wondered she hadn’t done it before.

“But she was safe from his anger for the present. She had slipped out of the castle early in the evening, disguised in her maid’s clothing; her lover had every thing prepared, met her at the castle gate, and in half an hour their hands were joined by the priest. Her maid had remained in her mistress’s chamber with the door locked, answering all who knocked that her mistress was dressing, till the last minute, and then made her own escape and joined the now perfectly happy pair.

“The most diligent search was kept up by the enraged father and the disappointed

bridegroom, but it was not till the end of three months that the latter accidentally discovered their retreat, in a beautiful little cottage near Toledo. They were living in happiness and luxury, for she had an immense fortune in her own right, inherited from her mother.

“The young Don did not make his presence known, and his plans are only gleaned from what transpired afterward. The young husband went out one day as usual, bidding his sweet little wife an affectionate good-bye—and never returned. Long and wearily she watched for his coming, the light died out of her eyes and the red faded from her cheek, but he never came again.

“Then her father came and carried her back to his castle. She had feared at first that her husband was dead, but when her father laughed at her, and said ‘her beau-

tiful young gallant had gone to a lady he loved much better,' she stopped her ears and prayed that he might be dead; for, dearly as she loved him, she had rather he was dead than false to her. What cruelties she suffered in that old castle were never known, but, a few months after, she disappeared a second time, accompanied by her maid, and her father never could find her again. He died soon after, of a fall from a horse, and nobody was at all sorry. The unfaithful husband—"

"Not unfaithful! Oh, God! not unfaithful!" broke in the clear, thrilling voice of Señor Torras, to the unbounded astonishment of all present. "Man, or wizard, whichever you are," he continued earnestly, "that can read the story of my past life, like the pages of a book, do not do me that injustice. How I loved my wife—my beautiful Juanita—let your own heart an-

swer for me. Let this white hair, that was blanched before my prime, testify of my devotion. Let me explain, as far as I can, my part in this dreadful history:—

“ On that fatal morning I left my beautiful cottage home to go about the city, intending to be absent but a few hours. While gone I received a note, signed with the initials of an old friend, saying that he should sail in a certain ship that morning, and requesting to see me on board, on urgent business. I went immediately on board the ship—was told my friend was below, went down into the cabin, and in ten minutes was in irons and gagged.

“ Before I had begun to recover from my astonishment, I felt the motion of the ship; and then for the first time flashed over my mind the name of the ship—it belonged to Don Pedro. Then I knew the snare that had been set for me, and re-

solved by cool calculation to outwit them yet. It is well we can not read the future, we would die of fear.

“ I suffered the keenest tortures that human nature can bear, when I thought of my young and lovely wife, left so unprotected and so unprepared ; but my captors were deaf to every prayer, and there was nothing left but patient endurance. What I endured I have not the nerve to tell to-night. I was taken to the coast of Africa, and for ten years I dragged out a living death in the lowest bondage. I was loaded with chains, and subjected to the hardest labor, but I cared nothing for that. It was the horrible stories my tormentors would pour into my ears, at their return from every voyage, that nearly drove me mad.

“ After ten years I made my escape, and went back to Spain ; but I might as well have gone to the midst of a desert, for all

the trace I could find of my wife. Her father had been dead for years, and his castle had passed into the hands of strangers. I searched far and near for some clue to her fate, but in vain. Then, feeling careless what became of me, I took to the sea, and it seemed that fate tried to taunt me, for, when I no longer cared for it, every thing I touched turned to gold. I traveled over every land and amassed great wealth, but I took no delight in it—my heart seemed dead; and when the tide of fortune turned, and my ships one after the other went down at sea, it did not cause me a pang. In the course of time I wandered to this country; but my strength and ambition had long departed, and it was with gratitude that I accepted John Brewster's proposal to become your son's tutor.

“From the day that I left my wife so suddenly and unexpectedly, I have never

found the slightest trace of her, till I found this rosary in a little box that came from here,"—and saying this, the Señor drew from his bosom *the* rosary that you have heard of before. Pressing it to his lips, he cried, in a voice that was almost a wail—"She always wore it on her bosom. Juanita, my beautiful Juanita, where are you?"

"I am here, Franco," replied a hollow voice, and the startled company sprang to their feet; the door of the next room was open, and on the threshold stood their stranger-guest.

The Señor stood a moment as though petrified, gazing into her face, then crying "Juanita!" he stretched out his arms. She tottered forward and fell fainting on his bosom.

The utmost confusion prevailed for a while, as you may suppose, at the singular

turn affairs seemed to be taking. Every one rejoiced with the strangely united pair, and the stricken wife was soon brought back to consciousness. At length, seated beside the husband of her youth, whose face she had not looked on for twenty years, their thin hands locked together as though they feared to be again separated, she went on to supply another link in this most singular chain of events.

“I feel, someway, as though I had just come back from some other world; some world of trouble, and clouds, and mystery. When last I saw you, my beloved Franco, your form was straight and lithe, your hair and beard were raven black, and you were young and strong. But strange as the change in you appears to me, the change in myself is even more strange. I know not where the years have gone to, that have taken my youth and beauty

away, and left me thus withered and old. But Franco," she said, in a voice of touching tenderness, "our hearts can never grow old. Look over this weary bridge of years, and see me still your own young loving wife." The old man folded her in his arms, and more than one pair of eyes in the room needed wiping.

"I must have wandered in this vague unreal world a long time, but your voice called me out of it, Franco; nothing else would do it. I heard a voice awhile ago, singing the little serenade you have sung to me so many times in that long ago, and I knew it was your voice. I think I would have known it even in my grave; but I was still wandering in that mysterious world, and could not find my way to you. Again, to-night your voice fell on my ear, and I listened: then dimly comprehending the story you were telling,

I seemed to be approaching you, drawn by some irresistible force, till you called me, and then it seemed that the clouds broke away, and the sun shone out.

“I remember the day you left me, how I watched and waited the night through, pacing up and down the garden walk till Inez forced me to my bed, and I slept only that I might renew my vigil again. Days, weeks, and months, went by, and I feared that you were dead.

“My father came and took me by force back to his castle, that was now as loathsome as a dungeon to me. He told me you were false to me, and had gone to one you loved better, and then I hoped you were dead. Think how I suffered, Franco, to wish you dead. *He*, you know, our bitterest foe, was constantly about the castle, and I endured such insult and abuse from him, that, at last—I must have gone

mad—for I remember of springing at him one day with a stiletto in my hand—and the next thing I knew I lay in our own little cottage with a baby in my arms.”

The emotion of the old Señor at this announcement was almost painful to see; his wife soothed him tenderly, her own tears falling meanwhile, and every one present felt the deepest sympathy and interest. She continued:—

“Dear, faithful Inez watched over me with a sister’s love, and I woke to peace and happiness; such peace and happiness as I *could* enjoy without you. But I had your child to comfort me; your dear precious little daughter, and how I cherished her you can imagine, but I can not tell. New beauty was born into the world with her, and she brought the smile of heaven on her face. But even this little happiness was not to be mine long.

“A message came that you had returned, and was lying sick at a certain place. Without a moment’s delay I went—left my child to go to you. You can not blame me, husband; such was my love, that I would have given my soul to find you. The message of course was false, and I returned to find my home desolate. Our child was gone. I heard Inez say the fearful words, and then I think I died.

“Ever since then I have been groping about in a world of darkness, with only here and there a faint glimmering of light. I must have wandered about a great deal, for I always felt that something urged me forward, I knew not where, to find my child. You too, dear Franco, were ever in my mind; I have a vague remembrance of always wanting to be handsomely dressed to meet you.”

Do you remember this, my poor

Juanita ?" asked the Señor, showing her the rosary.

"My rosary !" she cried, "your gift on my wedding-day, engraved with our names in cipher. How did you come by this, Franco ?"

"Try and remember when you last had it."

"Let me think," she answered slowly. "It comes to me like a dream. I was wandering over a great country that had many hills ; the soil was hot under my feet, and the sun poured fire upon my head, I was weary and broken-hearted. I came to a green, shady grotto ; within it was a shrine, and on a pure white altar lay a dead saint, or a sleeping angel. The air was cool to my heated brow, the floor was cool to my weary feet, and I knelt to worship. As I prayed, a feeling of deep peace stole over me, and I heard a voice as

though it was in the clouds say to me, 'Leave your precious rosary upon the shrine, and go your way for a time; when you come again you shall find your loved ones.' Then I was comforted: I laid my rosary down and went away, but I never could find the place again."

"Did it look like this, my love?" and the Señor led his wife—who had had no eyes for any thing but him—up to Allie's couch.

"This is the picture; it all comes back to me now," she exclaimed; "another day I must find out all these dear friendly people, but to-night my poor mind can comprehend nothing but my husband."

"I almost chide myself for the thought," said Señor Torras, "when this great happiness has been granted me to-night, but I can not but regret our childless old age. There may be some hope of finding her

even yet; but how should we know her after all these years?"

"If my mother-heart *should* fail to warn me, there is imprinted on her round soft arm the well known cipher on the rosary."

A cry broke from the white lips of Mrs. McBride. A queenly figure arose from a low seat beside Uncle Joe, and gliding up to the standing group, drew the rich folds of lace from the round smooth arm.

Indelibly stamped upon its polished surface was the cipher of the rosary.

My dear reader, I am done with descriptions; you must imagine the rest. A strangely severed, and still more strangely reunited, family lay down to sleep that night in the peaceful shadow of Inglenook. There were a great many more small links in this chain, but I will not weary you with them.

We will take leave of our dear friends while they are wrapped in peaceful slumber. In a few days they will separate and go their various ways, and perhaps we may find them again, somewhere on life's journey. But now, while all is still, we will furl our invisible wings, and breathing a fervent blessing on "Bonnie Ingle-nook," and the dear ones who inhabit it, leave them to their dreams.

THE END.

